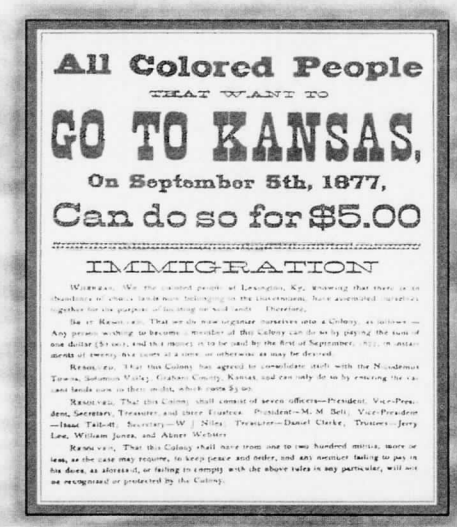
NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Nicodemus, Kansas



All Colored People

THAT WANT TO

GO TO KANSAS,

On September 5th, 1877,

Can do so for $5.00

IMMIGRATION

Whereas, We the colored people of Lexington, Ky., knowing that there is no chance or show here now belonging to the Government, have assembled ourselves together for the purpose of locating our said lands. Therefore,

Be it Resolved, That we do now organize ourselves into a Colony, as follows:—Any person wishing to become a member of this Colony can do so by paying the sum of one dollar ($1 00), and the money is to be paid by the first of September, 1877, in such amounts of twenty-five cents at a time, or otherwise as may be desired.

Resolved, That this Colony has agreed to consolidate stock with the Nicodemus Town, Solomon Valley, Graham County, Kansas, and can only do so by entering the said lands now in their names, which costs $5 00.

Resolved, That this Colony shall consist of seven officers—President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Trustees. President—M. M. Bell; Vice-President—Isaac Taliaferro; Secretary—W. J. Niles; Treasurer—Daniel Clarke; Trustees—Jerry Lee, William Jones, and Abner Webster.

Resolved, That this Colony shall have from one to two hundred miles, more or less, as the case may require, to keep peace and order, and any member failing to pay in his dues, as aforesaid, or failing to comply with the above rules in any particular, will not be recognized or protected by the Colony.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT JANUARY 2003

NICODEMUS
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
GRAHAM COUNTY, KANSAS

Cultural Landscape Report

January 2003

Bibliography

AUTH: Bahr Vermeer & Haecker Architects and OCULUS
TITLE: Nicodemus National Historic Site, Graham County, Kansas: Cultural Landscape Report
STTY: «63»
DRAFT:
BIBN: 017966
ALPH: «MWRO»
PROG:
CLUS:
GRPH: «10»/«13»/«14»
REGION: Midwest
HOLD: «WASO»
PLPU: Lincoln, NE
PUBL: Bahr Vermeer & Haecker Architects
DATE: 1/2003
LCS#:
NTCT:
CSI#:
REST:
PAGS: 368
VOLS:
CRD#:2005-364844
BUID:
SRTI:
SRVI:
CHAD:
DSCT:
GPO#:
SHLF:
NOTE:
ABST:
CALL:

Nicodemus National Historic Site

Nicodemus, Kansas

Cultural Landscape Report

Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects, Ltd.
Lincoln, Nebraska

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Recommended _____ **Date:** 30 Dec 02
Chief, Cultural Resources
Midwest Regional Office

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Site Manager, Nicodemus National Historic Site

Concurred Steve Lundeen **Date:** 1/3/03
Superintendent, Fort Larned National Historic Site

Approved _____ **Date:** 1/7/03
Regional Director, Midwest Regional Office

NICODEMUS

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Graham County, Kansas

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Prepared for
National Park Service
Midwest Regional Office
Omaha, Nebraska

Prepared by
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Charlottesville, Virginia

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ORDER NO. DO606899008

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Chapter 1



ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Chapter 1

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

PROJECT BACKGROUND

On November 12, 1996, Congress established Nicodemus National Historic Site (NHS), a unit of the National Park system that would be administered by the National Park Service (NPS) with the express purpose of

- preserving and interpreting, for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations, the remaining structures and locations that represent the history (including settlement and growth) of the town of Nicodemus, Kansas; and

- interpreting the historical role of the town of Nicodemus during the Reconstruction period in the context of westward expansion in the United States.

The establishment of this new unit of the National Park system built upon previous efforts to recognize the national significance of the townsite, beginning with its designation as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) on January 7, 1976. This NHL designation recognized the exceptional national significance of the 161.35-acre Nicodemus Historic District (previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places) which is a rare surviving example of the late nineteenth century movement to establish new communities for former slaves away from the injustices and difficulties encountered in remaining in the South after Reconstruction.

The Nicodemus NHS, comprised of five discontiguous properties including some of the oldest surviving structures within the townsite, followed the preparation of a Special Resource Study in 1993 aimed at determining the suitability of adding Nicodemus as a unit of the nation's National Park system. The establishment of the Nicodemus NHS would require that the NPS prepare a General Management Plan (GMP) to guide the approach to management and care of the property over a ten to fifteen year period. This work was initiated in 1998.

This Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), commissioned by the NPS in fall 1999, is intended to support the GMP by providing important baseline information as well as a treatment plan, which typically builds upon and supports the vision articulated in the GMP. However, because the GMP has not yet been completed, the CLR provides recommendations that are based on the site's significance and integrity, and suggests an appropriate preservation approach that can be adapted to the specifics of the GMP at a later date.

The CLR has been prepared by a multidisciplinary team of consultants, primed by Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects, Ltd. of Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska, selected through an NPS Midwest Regional Office indefinite quantities contract.

The client and consultant team consists of:

National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office

Sherda Williams, Historical Landscape Architect

National Park Service, Nicodemus National Historic Site

Steve Linderer, Superintendent
Felix Revello, Chief Park Ranger
Dennis Carruth, Site Manager

Bahr Vermeer & Haecker, Architects

Dan Worth, AIA, Principal
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OCULUS

Rob McGinnis, Principal-in-Charge
Liz Sargent, Project Manager and Historical Landscape Architect
Rachel Lloyd, Landscape Architect
Gina Haney, Planner and Architectural Historian
Pam Liu, Intern Landscape Architect
Aaron Cross, Cartographer
Adriane Fowler, Project Designer

Rivanna Archaeological Consulting

Benjamin Ford, Project Landscape Historian

Luis Torres

Luis Torres, Oral Historian

Forgy Surveying

Galen Forgy, Surveyor

Angela Bates-Tompkins

Angela Bates-Tompkins, Consulting Historian and Community Liaison

While work on the CLR was progressing, the NPS engaged Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects to prepare a Historic Structures Report (HSR) for the buildings located within the Nicodemus NHS. The project teams for the CLR and HSR subsequently coordinated their work on these two documents and shared resources and materials as appropriate.

STUDY BOUNDARIES AND DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTIES INVOLVED

See figures 1. through 3., Nicodemus context and location, township, and townsite maps.

This CLR provides documentation of the Nicodemus landscape at three scales. The first addresses the broad patterns of the 36-section Nicodemus Township,[1] located within Graham County, Kansas. The depiction of the Township provides context for a more detailed description of the setting and history of the one-mile square Section 1, Township 8 South, Range 21 West, 6th Principal Meridian, which encompasses the Nicodemus townsite. The townsite, which is located within the northwestern quadrant of Section 1, is a designated NHL. Five parcels located within the NHL comprise the Nicodemus NHS:

- ***First Baptist Church***, a 0.18-acre property located at the northeastern corner of Fourth Street and Washington Avenue. The parcel is owned by Church Baptist Congress. It includes the First Baptist Church, constructed in 1907;

- ***Fletcher-Switzer residence*** (former St. Francis Hotel), a 0.55-acre property located at the southeastern corner of Third Street and Washington Avenue. This parcel is owned by Veryl Switzer and includes one of the oldest surviving houses within the townsite;

- former ***Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse***, a 2.33-acre parcel located at the northwestern corner of Fourth Street and Madison Avenue. This parcel is owned by the American Legion Post. It includes a schoolhouse built in 1918;

- former ***African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church***, a 0.51-acre parcel located at the northwestern corner of Third Street and Adams Avenue. The parcel includes a late nineteenth century church building and five agricultural storage buildings. The southeastern portion of the parcel—0.17-acres in size—is owned by the Federal Government and administered by the NPS; and

- ***Township Hall***, encompassing approximately 0.73-acres located at the northwestern corner of Second Street and Washington Avenue. This parcel is owned by the Nicodemus Township Board. It features a 1939 community use building, recreational facilities, and a small frame structure used for group activities.

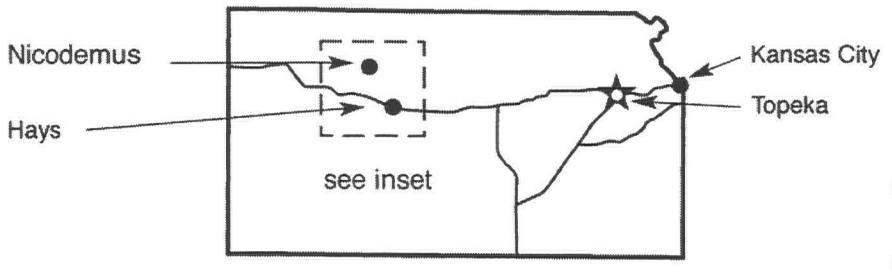
These five properties, in conjunction with two publicly held parcels that abut the Township Hall property:

- ***Township Park***, approximately 0.18 acres in size, located at the northwestern corner of Third Street and Washington Avenue. This parcel is owned by the Nicodemus Township Board and features playground equipment and a monument; and

- ***Roadside Park***, approximately 1.1 acres in size. Located at the northwestern corner of Second Street and Washington Avenue, this parcel is also owned and maintained by the Nicodemus Township Board. It features picnic tables and historical markers.

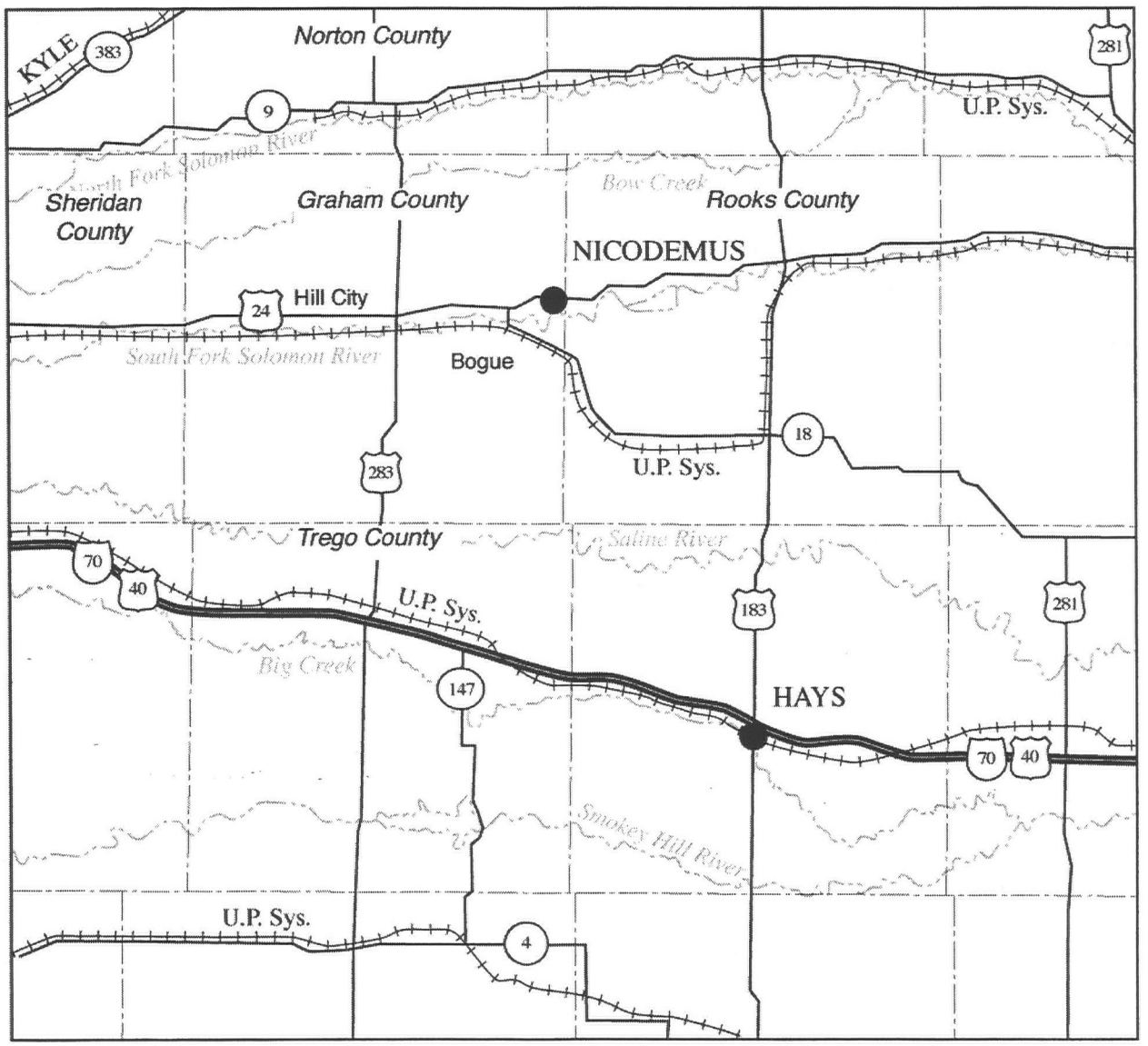
are the focus of the most detailed level of documentation, analysis, and treatment developed as part of the CLR.

[1] Nicodemus Township is a localized political entity that supports Graham County government. It is comprised of portions of four different surveyed townships: Township 7 South, Range 21 West; Township 8 South, Range 21 West; Township 7 South, Range 22 West, and Township 8 South, Range 22 West, including twenty-eight full sections—seven wide and four high—and portions of eight other sections where the southern boundary of the township is formed by the meandering line of the South Fork Solomon River.



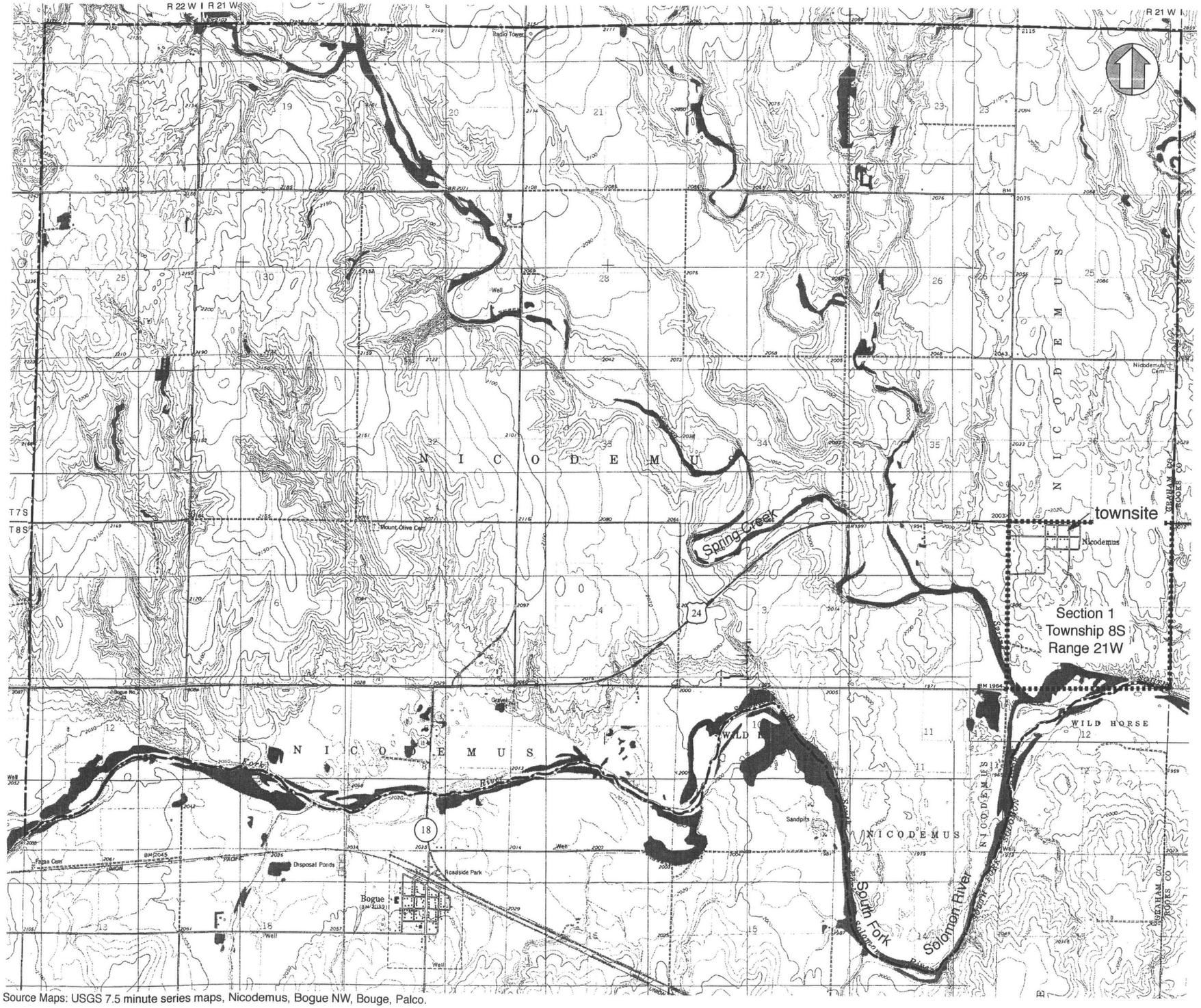
Context and Location Maps

Inset



Map source: Kansas Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Planning, Cartography Unit , 2000.

Figure 1.
Context and Location Maps.



Source Maps: USGS 7.5 minute series maps, Nicodemus, Bogue NW, Bouge, Palco.

Legend

- Township Boundary
- Section 1 Boundary
- Improved Roads
- Local Unimproved Roads
- Tree Cover

One Mile
Contour Interval = 10 ft

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
TOWNSHIP MAP

Figure 2.
Nicodemus Township map.

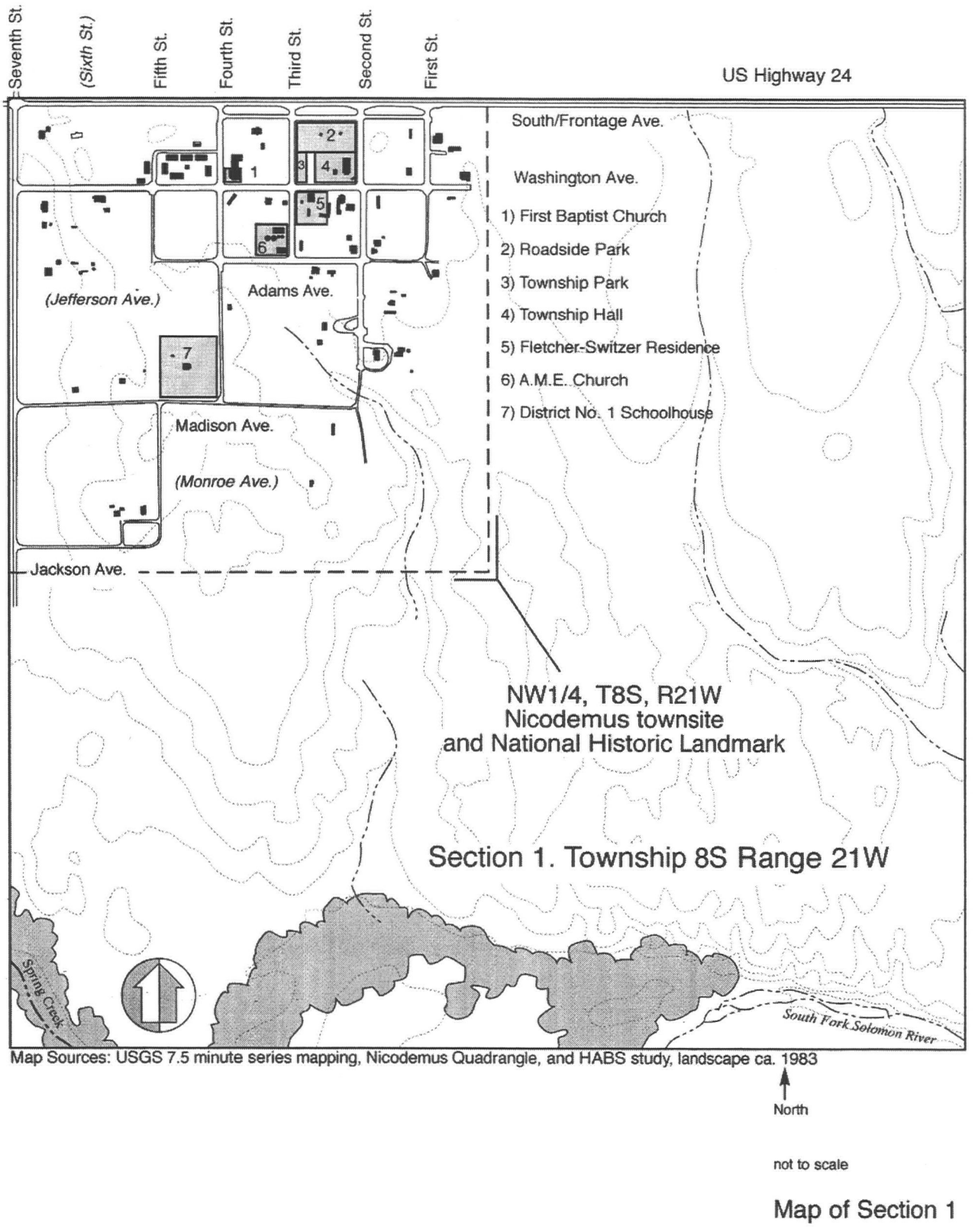


Figure 3.
Map of Section 1, Township 8S, Range 21W.

PROJECT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The Nicodemus CLR scope of work, prepared by the NPS in July 1999, identifies two Title I phases to be undertaken concurrently in support of the development of this CLR, and three phases to potentially be undertaken as funding became available. The two Title 1 phases initiated in 1999 included:

- Phase 1—project organization, research, field investigation, analysis, recommendation development, conceptual design, and report writing; and

- Phase 2—preparation of aerial photography and topographic, feature, and boundary and mapping services and a title search for the NHS properties.

Two of the other three phases described in the project scope of work, referred to as Phases 3, 4, and 5 respectively, have also been initiated, including:

- Phase 3—presentation of study results; and

- Phase 4—production of a site history booklet.

The final phase—Phase 5—involves preparation of landscape construction documents, specifications, cost estimates, and recommendations for phasing. This work may be optioned by the NPS at a later date, but is not currently part of this CLR.

The detailed and specific scope items associated with Phases 1 through 4 are included in Appendix A of this document. The methodology utilized by the project team to prepare the required scope items is also included in Appendix A.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Issue of Significance

Since its settlement in 1877, Nicodemus, Kansas, has been a significant place for African Americans, not only as a vibrant, living community that has weathered economic and environmental hardships, but also for the prominent symbolic role it has played in the settlement of the Black West, and as an historic example of self-determination and of socio-economic success. The cultural landscape of Nicodemus is recognized by the Federal Government as nationally significant because it is a rare example of a predominantly black community surviving from a late nineteenth century movement to relocate freed slaves from the injustices and difficulties encountered in remaining in the South after Reconstruction. The CLR confirms the areas and themes of significance identified in the Nicodemus NHL nomination, and suggests additionally that this living community appears significant as a traditional cultural property—a rural community of predominantly African-American friends, neighbors, and relatives, many of whom are descended from those who founded the townsite, or were early residents, and which continues to reflect beliefs and practices that have evolved with the community since its inception. Nicodemus is likely significant at the national level for the early settlement period—1877-1888—and as a traditional cultural property from 1877 to the present.

Nicodemus is clearly a community that cannot be defined by traditional geographic boundaries. From its initial settlement, the town of Nicodemus was a center of social, religious, educational and commercial activities for the surrounding region. In a pattern familiar to the American Midwest, early settlers resided both in town and within surrounding townships. Today, Nicodemus kinship ties extend beyond northwestern Kansas to most areas of the United States. Each year descendants, family, and friends are drawn back to Nicodemus for the 'Homecoming' celebration, to reconnect with family members and other descendants, reminisce, and most importantly to return 'home.' This long-standing cultural practice serves to celebrate and reinforce who Nicodemus's African-American families are and where they came from. By re-establishing kin and social networks, Nicodemus's African Americans continue to practice a nearly-125-year-old tradition of cultural renewal and reaffirmation.

Interviews with former and current Nicodemus residents have consistently identified buildings, structures, and other regional cultural and natural features that are important to the community and its sense of place. The landscape of Nicodemus Township, the townsite, and other associated areas in 2002 continues to be viewed and valued by descendants of the community's early settlers as a reflection of the purpose and meaning behind the exodus and settlement of their ancestors. Descendants have continuously used this landscape to maintain the historic identity of the community. In addition, though the landscape has changed since the late nineteenth century, the land use patterns, farm clusters, road systems, and towns continue to be understood as connected with the early settlers. Places such as the original townsite, Spring Creek and the South Fork Solomon River, the former Welton/Scruggs's Grove and

baseball diamond, former communities of Fairview and Mount Olive, the Nicodemus and Mount Olive Cemeteries, the locations of former dugouts and sod dwellings, and the overall agricultural character and use of the Township are historically significant and in most cases continue to be important symbols and landmarks in the eyes of the Nicodemus community.

Though an assessment of the physical change that has occurred since the early settlement period of significance may lead to a determination of loss of integrity, as a traditional cultural property with a period of significance that extends to the present, future change will continue to be character-defining as long as the period of significance extends into the future. Rather than identifying contributing and non-contributing landscape resources, the CLR focuses on patterns and resource types that may be representative of the entire history of the community. Clarification of these character-defining components, characteristics, features, and systems is intended to provide a critical source of information to those involved in planning and implementing the means for conveying the history, legacy, and significance of Nicodemus to visitors, and help members of the community to make informed decisions about the nature of change in the future.

Resource Management

As the focus of a CLR, Nicodemus is unusual in the breadth and land area of the community, and the presence of numerous property owners and interested parties without previously determined goals for the future. Since the NPS maintains administrative responsibility for only a small component of the Nicodemus community, this CLR has been conceived as a tool that might support not only NPS management of the NHS but also the larger community as they delineate a program and process for managing future landscape change, some of which may result from an increase in tourism relating to NHS establishment. As many communities around the country can attest, it is all too easy to lose the history, community, and sense of place to non-local commercial developments that can suddenly add up to major change, even if the erosion is not always evident on an individual basis. A tenuous balance can be struck between the seemingly conflicting goals of increased economic opportunity and preservation and perpetuation of this historic community. This CLR suggests ways in which the local community and the Federal Government might join forces to positively guide change.

In support of the existing NHS and the potential for visitation to provide much-needed economic opportunities, the CLR stresses the importance of interpretation-based interventions in the landscape. The assumption underlying all recommended treatments is that certain characteristics in the landscape support interpretation of the history and significance of Nicodemus, and that sensitive and appropriate future developments that draw from an understanding of these characteristics will enhance the ability of people to both live in and learn from the resources at the site. The resources that are important to the stories of Nicodemus are both tangible and intangible. Intangible heritage, such as agricultural practices, foodways, and community customs are critical components of the society and enrich the site's interpretive potential; interpretation will be most successful if it presents a complete understanding of the variety and matrix of these tangible and intangible resources.

The role of local community members and descendants in this process is critical to the future success of this course. The absence of descendants occupying and using the landscape would potentially diminish the ability of the landscape to convey its significance. Efforts to preserve the community landscape may slow deterioration, but cannot ensure the ability of the site to convey its significance unless they also bolster the population. And, on the other hand, it is possible that the introduction of landscape change by non-descendants may dilute the significance of the overall landscape.

Tools that may help to protect local resources from unwanted change include preservation and protection of private land and viewsheds through land and scenic conservation easements, support of local agriculture, and establishment of community stewardship tools and incentives that promote preservation and sensitive development and are responsive to the concerns and needs of property owners. It will be important for the local community to consider forming organizations that can become involved in establishing goals, assessing resources, developing tourism products and interpretation plans, and managing, presenting, and interpreting resources. Of critical importance to this discussion is acknowledgement of the balance that must ultimately be struck between conserving the community and creating the opportunities for spending that form the basis for tourism-dependent economic development.

An appropriate tool to consider for achieving this mission is the heritage tourism model. The CLR team recommends that a heritage tourism development model be investigated for the relevant potential strategies, approaches, and solutions it might offer to regional resource stewardship and economic development. This is not to say that heritage area designation should be explored. Rather, the processes involved in establishing a heritage area may be an appropriate tool in the planning for the community of Nicodemus. The same challenges facing the community of Nicodemus and its partner the NPS have been addressed through heritage tourism development elsewhere within the nation.

Planning for tourism should consider issues such as the approach route, the tour route, and the provision of infrastructure to support the comfort, safety, and enjoyment of the visitor as well as the resident. For example, a visitor contact station providing restrooms, wayfinding information, and an introduction to the town and township may be an appropriate addition to the region. However, it is important that the location and setting for new infrastructure not compromise existing historic building fabric, landscape features, views and vistas, particularly within the NHS. An increases in visitation levels to the townsite will require measures to ensure that the desired quality of life of residents is maintained. For this reason, it would be appropriate to locate a new visitor contact facility beyond the limits of the townsite, and to limit the number of visitor and tour-related vehicles in the townsite at any one time.

Wayfinding, orientation, and excellent levels of communication will be required to mitigate visitor access to the public streets of the townsite. Clearly, the physical proximity of a visitor contact facility to the townsite could result in traffic and parking problems; a transportation analysis should be a component of any feasibility studies. The community, including landowners, and local and regional government must be part of this process. The community must be presented with information on potential near-term and long-range impacts of private landowner plans as well as any public visitor facility and access-related plans.

Additionally, it is essential to consider the impacts of increased vehicular access on the condition of roads and road-related infrastructure, including increased maintenance requirements. Increased traffic on unpaved roads will likely increase dust pollution, which must be mitigated if levels are beyond what the community can tolerate.

Finally, increases in visitation may lead to conflicts between pedestrians, vehicles, cyclists, and horse-drawn wagons. Future planning initiatives will need to address these potential conflicts. This is very important given that walking tours may be the primary interpretive program within the townsite and residents and others will continue to access their townsite while visitors are present.

Nicodemus Township Recommendations

Most critical to preserving the overall rural agricultural character—a character that communicates the significance of the community of Nicodemus—is the survival of crop farms and ranches. Though the scope of this report does not include an analysis of current agricultural trends and conditions, it does outline the primary non-regulatory rural conservation tools available to landowners and local farmers. In the absence of local government regulatory controls and approaches to preserving rural character, other non-regulatory measures, means, and approaches should be identified and possibly employed to preserve rural character. The community may benefit from the application of conservation easements or the establishment of a community-based private non-profit entity that could purchase key properties with important character-defining features or threatened resources. Both of these tools would help Nicodemus to preserve its land use history and to support cultural heritage tourism.

Nicodemus Townsite Recommendations

Designation as an NHL provides no direct limitations of the use, maintenance, or character of buildings and the landscape, except that under Section 110 (f) of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, Federal agencies are directed to ensure that adequate measures are taken to minimize harm to NHLs that may be directly and adversely affected by their undertakings. NHL status can in fact be revoked based on a change in the integrity of the site. In support of the perpetuation of Nicodemus's character—particularly the resources surviving from and associated with the significant early settlement period of the late nineteenth century—the CLR includes recommendations that are intended to provide limited interim guidance to the NPS and the Nicodemus community when evaluating and managing near-term change arising from neglect, removal, alteration, and rehabilitation of physical resources, and new development. The purpose of providing these guidelines is not so much to affect the actions of owners

of existing properties as it is to anticipate future community efforts to develop their own mechanisms for guiding change.

To sustain the integrity of the historic community, new development should be monitored by a community-based, non-profit entity to ensure that the appearance, scale, and impact of the development combine to positively complement and not detract from the Township. The community's procedures for accepting new development should be carefully reviewed and adjusted in light of expectations that additional tourism will generate welcomed financial opportunities.

The Nicodemus townsite provides a context for the five NHS properties. The matrix of roads, paths, old and new buildings and structures, plantings, fences, playground equipment, and signs (among other features) create a sense of place that is both historic and contemporary. The townsite has experienced denser development over time than the Township, and may exhibit a wider array of possible interpretive themes because of this concentration of different resources. The townsite has been a religious, educational, social, governmental, and familial center for the larger Nicodemus community for many generations, and the physical evidence of these uses is extant today. The potential to interpret this matrix of community activities is high, and suggests that the townsite should be a focus for visitors.

In determining the preservation and stewardship approach for the townsite, it is important to understand its threshold for change, and to determine what development would threaten its identity or the future interpretation of its history and culture. Possibly the greatest threat to the physical character of the community is the development of new park-like, rather than town-like, features. Most new town development generated by or compatible with the wishes of the community would, in theory, be in keeping with the goal to let the town continue to evolve on its own. To impose an outside character or style on new development may alter the overall town scene beyond its ability to convey the interpretive themes outlined in the Draft GMP.

Nicodemus National Historic Site Recommendations

REHABILITATION—THE RECOMMENDED TREATMENT APPROACH

The treatment recommendations and guidelines provided for the NHS are intended to help the site manager to meet current and future functional, maintenance, and management needs at the site. Because rehabilitation is defined as "the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions, while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values," **rehabilitation** is the primary overall recommended approach to landscape management for the Nicodemus NHS. The other three treatment approaches recognized and defined by the Secretary of the Interior—preservation, restoration, and reconstruction—were considered in the development of the treatment plan, but not recommended by the CLR due to the potential burdens of associated treatments on the community and the NPS, or the impossibility of restoration and reconstruction due to a lack of documentary evidence.

Historic sites are rarely static environments. The CLR treatment recommendations are intended to address the challenges associated with balancing resource protection, operations and use, and interpretation by identifying an overall flexible approach to the protection, preservation, and maintenance of site resources; and recommending specific concepts for managing the site, using rehabilitation standards as a guide. Rehabilitation will provide a rich and fulfilling visitor experience, and allow the implementation of necessary functional site improvements to meet the needs associated with ongoing use. Within the overall framework of rehabilitation, the preliminary analysis and evaluation sections of this CLR suggests a resource-driven approach to management that takes into consideration the site's various periods of landscape history and land use, as well as the potential for adaptive reuse.

Some alternatives presented in the Draft GMP outline an approach of sharing the stewardship of the five sites with the community, and working in partnership with the residents and descendants to tell the story of Nicodemus. The CLR concurs with this approach, in which, as noted in the September 2000 draft of the GMP,

the NPS would seek to balance its management responsibility for the five NHS properties with community self-determination. The goals of this approach would be to:

- minimize the impacts on community quality of life while supporting community-initiated activities and development;

- sustain the community's viability and emotional connection to Nicodemus

- preserve the 'pride of place' evidenced by residents' and descendants' continuing association with the place, investment in the land, recognition of their history, perseverance, and deep roots there.[2]

The specific treatment of the five NHS properties will likely continue to evolve as the planning and public participation process of the GMP continues. As a general guide, however, the CLR recommends the following:

Principles of Preservation Maintenance

HIGHER PRIORITY

Safety
Protection and preservation of historic materials and features
Perpetuation of historic character
Support of property/site operations and current use
Use of historic methods and materials
Encouragement of lower-cost maintenance

LOWER PRIORITY

Improvement of aesthetics

Phase One: Protect and stabilize existing landscape features and systems

Due to the limited information on the historic character and date of origin of many extant landscape features and systems, undertake a program and operations including:

- identification of the threats to resources;
- minimization of site disturbance;
- protection of deteriorated landscape features;
- stabilization of threatened landscape features;
- improvement of the condition of features;
- monitoring the condition of features; and
- keeping records of treatment and maintenance.

Phase Two: Repair and retain extant landscape features

As new planning-level information is developed regarding the potential use and rehabilitation of the sites, undertake a program of continued maintenance including:

- protection of existing landscape features from identified threats;
- repair of damaged features;
- maintenance of features in stabilized condition;
- monitoring the condition of features; and
- keeping records of treatment and maintenance.

Phase Three: Maintain features and preserve historic landscape character

After a Record of Decision is made regarding the GMP and other treatment-related planning-level documents and agreements are completed, undertake a program of implementing and sustaining long-term stewardship of the rehabilitated and preserved landscape, including:

- perpetuation of landscape character as defined by this CLR, other planning and treatment-related documents, and a future preservation maintenance plan;
- retention of historic features in good condition;
- removal and replacement of features in-kind when they begin to adversely affect character or deteriorate beyond repair;
- monitoring the condition of features;
- keeping records of treatment and maintenance; and
- incorporation of new features to accommodate visitors as well as private economic development activities that are sensitive to existing community character.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Based upon the work that has been conducted to date by the CLR team, numerous questions have been identified that might be answered through further study that was beyond the scope of this project. These questions and issues are listed below to support the evolving process of planning for this relatively new and unique unit of the National Park system. Further study could support the development of an appropriate approach to resource management and treatment as the GMP is completed.

[2] National Park Service, DRAFT "Nicodemus General Management Plan," n.p. September 19, 2000, 32.

Historical Research

- conduct additional research by locating a repository housing older issues of the *Wichita News*. As mentioned in the oral histories, at least one Nicodemus resident is known to have contributed columns of local news to the paper. Review of these columns may provide additional insight into life in Nicodemus during the early to mid-twentieth century.

- conduct additional personal interviews to determine more about the evolution of Homecoming and other traditional cultural practices, such as baptisms in the river. Conduct additional contextual research to determine whether baptisms in rivers and streams was brought to the area by former enslaved people from the South, or by others.

- conduct additional research to determine whether any individuals who settled in Nicodemus Township took advantage of the Timber Culture Act.

- conduct additional research in railroad records to determine whether 1887–1888 surveys of townsite prepared by Central Branch, Union Pacific, and Santa Fe railroads survive.

- conduct additional research into the origins of nineteenth century regional speculative town plats to provide contextual perspective, identify the source for the Nicodemus town plat, and determine whether it was used elsewhere.

- conduct additional investigations to determine whether "improved" farming practices adopted in the 1910s helped the community to weather the Dust Bowl.

- conduct research to determine if the refusal of local banks to approve farm loan applications from local farmers during the Great Depression hastened the depopulation and economic decline of Nicodemus. At least one eyewitness stated that bankers expressed racial prejudice when denying loan applications.

Archeology

- conduct additional research and an archeological overview and assessment to determine the archeological potential of the townsite and the sensitivity level of the resources.

- consider developing the context for regional Native American history. Consider developing a predictive model for potential Native American sites. Conduct an archeological survey of the larger Township, taking into consideration the predictive model, as well as existing knowledge of the early settlement period homestead and community sites within the Township, to determine their archeological potential.

- consider conducting more detailed archeological investigations of the existing townsite structures that are known to survive from the early settlement period, particularly the A.M.E. Church which is currently administered by the NPS. Investigate whether any of the original First Baptist Church building survives within the archeological record.

Other Studies and Reports

- conduct an ethnographic study to support the evaluation of Nicodemus as a traditional cultural property.

- prepare a Historic Resource Study to support the contextual documentation of Nicodemus and its significance evaluation.

- consider revising the National Register Nomination and the NHL designation information by incorporating a period of significance. Consider evaluating the site as a traditional cultural property based on the preparation of an ethnographic study.

- undertake, in conjunction with the community, a feasibility study that considers the potential to establish a community-based management entity.

- consider engaging an economist to investigate the tourism development potential of Nicodemus.

Interpretation

- prepare a comprehensive interpretive plan for the Township that considers the full interpretive potential of the site and incorporates knowledge gained from archeological investigations.

Chapter 2



SITE PHYSICAL HISTORY

Chapter 2

SITE PHYSICAL HISTORY

See Appendix B for Township population statistics over time, and Appendix C for inventory lists of landscape features associated with each historic period.

INTRODUCTION

The site physical history for this Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) is divided into eleven separate periods. These periods are based on important physical changes that occurred within the Nicodemus landscape, some of which were in response to broad historical trends that also affected the region or the nation. The eleven periods identified as defining the evolution of Nicodemus's cultural landscape are:

- Period I: Pre-European American Indian Occupation, ca. 12,000 BP–1540 AD
- Period II: Contact Period, ca. 1540–1803
- Period III: Early American Occupation, ca. 1803–1854
- Period IV: Creation of the Kansas Territory, the State of Kansas, and Graham County, ca. 1854–1877
- Period V: The Establishment of Nicodemus and the Arrival of 'Colonies,' ca. 1877–1879
- Period VI: The Boom Years: Commercial Nicodemus, 1879–1888

(*Periods V and VI comprise the periods of significance relating to the Nicodemus National Historic Landmark*)

- Period VII: Post-Railroad Abandonment of Nicodemus: A Return to Agriculture, 1888–1930
- Period VIII: Decline of the Nicodemus Community: The Dust Bowl and World War II, 1930–1945
- Period IX: Nicodemus as a Social and Cultural Center, 1945–1956
- Period X: Deterioration of the Physical Fabric of Nicodemus, 1956–1972
- Period XI: Resettlement of Nicodemus and Its Development as a National Historic Site, 1972–2002

PRE-EUROPEAN AMERICAN INDIAN OCCUPATION, CA. 12,000 BP–1540 AD

As Wood has noted, the area encompassed by the Great Plains, defined as the area stretching between southern Canada and northern Texas, and from eastern Wyoming and Colorado to western Iowa and Missouri, has been continuously occupied for more than 11,500 years. The area of study for this CLR in northwestern Kansas is generally agreed to be part of the Central Plains subdivision.[1]

The prehistory of the Central Plains, including northwestern Kansas, is divided into four cultural periods: the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Plains Woodland, and Plains Village. These periods are defined by a variety of characteristics that include technology, subsistence and settlement patterns, and social organization.

To date there have been fifty-eight archeological sites with prehistoric components identified in Graham County. Only one of these sites, 14GH308, is listed on the National Register. Of the rest, only two—14GH301 (the Trexler Site), and 14GH333—could be associated with a specific period of cultural development. Much of what we know about the prehistory of Graham County and the project area surrounding Nicodemus therefore is taken from archeological and ethnohistorical evidence from the larger region that includes western Kansas, eastern Colorado, and southern Nebraska.[2]

[1] W. Raymond Wood, ed., *Archaeology of the Great Plains* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 1, 11.

[2] The paucity of archeological sites in Graham County may be explained by the lack of an intensive county-wide survey. Given the long history of American Indian occupation of northwestern Kansas, it would be reasonable to assume that more archeological sites could be located if the funds to support a comprehensive survey were allocated.

Paleo-Indian Period

It is generally accepted that in the Great Plains region, the Paleo-Indian period, characterized by the distinctive Clovis, Goshen, Folsom, Plano and Cody cultures, began approximately 11,300 radio carbon years before present (RCYBP) and lasted until approximately 8,000 years RCYBP. The earliest regional Paleo-Indian site in western Kansas is the Twelve Mile Creek site located on the Smoky Hill River in Logan County, ninety miles southwest of Graham County, Kansas. Here a fluted lanceolate (spear-like) point was discovered directly associated with bison bones. Recent radiocarbon dating places this site in the Folsom cultural context. The Paleo-Indian groups are characterized as nomadic people, hunting big game animals such as mammoth, a now extinct species of bison, and exploiting a variety floral and faunal resources.[3]

The Archaic Period

The Archaic period is defined as beginning ca. 8,500 years RCYBP, and lasting through 2,500 years RCYBP. Few sites have been discovered in northwestern Kansas that date to the Archaic Period. In southern Nebraska, the Spring Creek site dates to 5,700 years BP. The occupants of the Spring Creek site depended upon bison, deer, antelope, beaver, and waterfowl. They possessed stone and bone tools including lanceolate and side notched points, and stone manos. At some Archaic sites, preliminary evidence suggests early plant husbandry and manipulation of native weedy plants and some gourd species. This indirect manipulation of certain plant species initiated the process that led to later horticultural developments.[4]

The Woodland Period

The Woodland Period is defined as beginning ca. 2,500 years RCYBP and lasting through 1,000 years RCYBP. As with the Archaic Period, few Woodland Period sites have been discovered in northwestern Kansas. A site in Phillips County in northern Kansas is the Woodruff Ossuary site (14PH4) that dates to ca. 1,400–1,600 years RCYBP. Projectile points from this site are characteristically medium to large, corner notched, small and Scallorn-like, and small, triangular, un-notched arrow points. Other sites include the Coal Oil Canyon site (14LO401) in Logan County, and the Young site (14SC1) in Scott County. Another site in the larger region is 14PA303 near Larned, Kansas. The site contained a midden suggesting a lengthy and continuous occupation. Faunal remains found at 14PA303 suggest a varied diet, including large and small mammals, rodents, birds, and shellfish. Variability in the tool assemblage suggests a shift from the use of the atlatl to the bow and arrow. In general, early Woodland economies still included bison, while a wider range of other resources, including fish, were utilized by later Woodland economies. During the early part of the Woodland Period, decorated ceramics are cord-marked or cord-roughened, with pots becoming more elaborately decorated towards the end of the period. The main cultural complex for the Plains Woodland in northwestern Kansas is the Keith Focus/Variant. Adair has described the Keith Variant with a settlement pattern that consisted of small hamlets and temporary camps that included round pit houses associated with burial mounds or ossuaries. Sites are frequently located on terraces overlooking major rivers. The size of these sites suggests that they were occupied by small nuclear families. Faunal remains recovered from these sites suggest that the Keith peoples exploited a diverse habitat that supported deer, antelope, beaver, raccoon, badger, coyote, jackrabbit, prairie dog, and other rodents and migratory birds. Abundant milling and grinding stones at these sites indicates that plants also played a significant role in daily subsistence.[5]

[3] Jack L. Hoffman and Russell W. Graham, "The Paleo-Indian Cultures of the Great Plains," in *Archaeology on the Great Plains*, ed. W. Raymond Wood (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 87-139; Matthew E. Hill Jr., "PaleoIndian Bison Remains from the 12-Mile Creek site in Western Kansas," in *Plains Anthropologist* 41, no. 158, (1996): 359-372; Kenneth L. Brown and Brad Logan, "The Distribution of PaleoIndian sites in Kansas," in *Quarternary Environments of Kansas*, ed. W. C. Johnson (Lawrence: Kansas Geological Survey Guide Book Series, 1987), 189-195.

[4] Marvin Kay, "The Central and Southern Plains Archaic," in *Archaeology on the Great Plains*, ed. W. Raymond Wood (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998), 173-200.

[5] Ann M. Johnson and Alfred E. Johnson, "The Plains Woodland," *Archaeology on the Great Plains*, ed. W. Raymond Wood (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 201-234; Mary J. Adair, "Woodland Complexes in the Central Great Plains," in *Archeology and Paleoecology of the Central Great Plains*, ed. J. L. Hoffman (Fayetteville: Arkansas Archeological Survey Research Series, No. 48, 1996), 115-116; Peter W. Bowman, ed. "Report on Preliminary Investigations, Coal-Oil Canyon (14LO1)," (Bulletin No. 1, Kansas Anthropological Association, 1959), 2-8; Peter W. Bowman, "Coal-Oil Canyon (14LO401): Progress Report, Area 7," *The Kansas Anthropologist* 17, no. 2 (1996): 33-62; Janice A. McLean, "Coal-Oil Canyon Revisited: History of Investigations, 1955-1996," *The Kansas Anthropologist* 17, no. 2 (1996): 1-32.

The Plains Village Period

The Plains Village Period is described as beginning ca. 1,100 years RCYBP and lasting up to the beginning of the historic period, 500 years BP. The Plains Village period is characterized by small, isolated clusters of 'earthlodges.' At the beginning of this period the human groups practiced a diversified subsistence and incorporated small-scale horticulture. Towards the end of the period, settlements became more centralized and larger. Within north-central and northwestern Kansas, a characteristic phase of the Plains Village period is identified as the Upper Republican manifestation of the Central Plains Tradition and is located in the Solomon River valley. The Upper Republican is usually characterized by settlements or campsites that are located on large streams or smaller tributaries adjacent to good soils, with convenient water and lithic sources. Houses are characteristically square or rectangular 'earthlodges' containing a central fire pit and one or more cache pits. Ceramics are sand-tempered and cord-marked with incised or excised decoration confined to the outer rim. Projectile points are small and triangular with side-notched and basal-notched varieties. Bone tools included scapula hoes, fishhooks, awls, and beads. Occupants were either buried beneath the lodges, or removed from original locations and reburied in an ossuary. Subsistence was dependent upon hunting and gathering. Recovered botanical evidence points to the gathering of walnuts, hackberry and sunflower seeds. Bison, elk and deer were also hunted. The presence of scapula hoes and maize, beans, and squash at a number of sites points to the cultivation of alluvial bottomland gardens.[6]

CONTACT PERIOD, CA. 1540–1803[7]

The earliest contact that American Indians in Missouri and Kansas may have had with Europeans was in the mid-sixteenth century. In 1540, Hernando de Soto traveled up the Arkansas River into southeastern Missouri. Several historians have associated de Soto's visit, and the subsequent introduction of European diseases, with the slow decline of large American Indian towns and the loss of social and political stability as reflected in later ethnographies and the archeological record.

The earliest Europeans to document the American Indians residing in Kansas were the Spanish. Throughout the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, they made several exploratory and military trips north into parts of western Kansas from the Rio Grande River. They were followed in turn by French missionaries, explorers, and fur traders beginning in the late seventeenth century and eventually by Americans in the early nineteenth century.[8]

Spanish Explorations

It is generally accepted that early Spanish expeditions reached into southwestern Kansas, but it is unclear how far north they penetrated or the exact route they took. In 1541, a military expedition searching for gold and other valuable minerals led by Francisco de Coronado likely entered southwestern Kansas near Liberal and proceeded in a northeasterly direction following the Arkansas River. They spent nearly two months in the vicinity of Rice and McPherson counties with the 'Quivira' people, who were described as living in villages of grass houses near the confluence of the Arkansas and Smoky Hill Rivers. These people farmed corn, beans and melons and lived in a well-watered and seemingly productive environment. Other more nomadic groups encountered in the vicinity were named 'querechos' and were described as living off roaming herds of "cattle" [bison]. These groups used dogs to pull their travois, and possessed bows and arrows and tepees made of hides. Most notably, no horses were present in American Indian Plains culture during the early period of Spanish exploration. The subsistence economy of the 'Quivira' was likely hunting and gathering with a dependence on

[6] Terry L. Steinacher and Gayle F. Carlson, "The Central Plains Tradition," in *Archaeology on the Great Plains*, ed. W. Raymond Wood (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 235-268; Richard A. Krause, "Aspects of Adaptation Among Upper Republican Subsistence Cultivators," in *Pleistocene and Recent Environments of the Central Great Plains*, eds. Wakefield Dort and J. Knox Jones, Special Publication No. 3, Department of Geology, University of Kansas (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1970), 103-115; Kerry Lippincott, "Solomon River Upper Republican Settlement Ecology," in *The Central Great Plains Tradition: Internal Development and External Relationships*, ed. D. J. Blakeslee (Office of the State Archaeologist, The University of Iowa, Report No. 11, 1978), 81-93.

[7] Information for this period of history in the project area and northwestern Kansas in general is scarce. This section therefore focuses on the larger context of early Spanish or French exploration of the area south and west of the Missouri River.

[8] Waldo R. Wedel, *An Introduction to Kansas Archaeology*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 174 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1959), 19-20.

horticulture. After the disappointment of not discovering productive mines, the Spanish returned to the Rio Grande.[9]

Subsequent visits to central Kansas by other explorers, including Don Juan de Onate in 1601, provided similar descriptions of American Indian villages, practices, and material culture. Archeological excavations in McPherson and Rice counties verify that early cultures in this vicinity were contacted by Europeans or offered goods in trade as early as the sixteenth century. Artifacts recovered from American Indian sites include pieces of chain mail, glass and turquoise beads, bison scapula hoes, mano and metate, mauls, knives, scrapers, awls, drill points, pipes, and pottery. Most of the faunal remains recovered were of bison.[10]

A century later, in 1706, Ulibarri led a Spanish military expedition to the Arkansas River, where he described bands of Apache growing corn and beans and reported threats from the Ute and Commanche. He recorded that the Apache wore crosses, medals, and rosaries and also possessed guns, iron kettles, hatchets, swords, copper items, and other European goods. Thirteen years later, Spanish Governor Valverde led another expedition north of the Rio Grande, where they encountered Apache who grew large fields of irrigated corn. Some villages also had stone houses. Again they encountered stories of Ute and Commanche raiders who possessed horses. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, many native peoples of the Great Plains had adapted to the horse and fully integrated it into their culture.[11]

These historical references suggest that the American Indians in southwestern Kansas were largely semi-nomadic, practicing limited horticulture, but were also dependent upon roaming herds. In addition, they were regularly in conflict with other neighboring peoples.[12]

French Exploration and Trading

The historic period in Kansas and other Central Great Plains states may be defined as beginning from approximately the last quarter of the seventeenth century on, when Frenchmen Louis Jolliet and Father Jacques Marquette 'discovered' the Mississippi River in 1673. Once discovered, the Mississippi and points west became the focus of extensive trade relationships, and a larger and more permanent European presence began to be established in the Central Great Plains region. The historic period is defined by increasingly frequent interaction between Europeans and American Indian groups as exploration and subsequent settlement by hunters, traders, and pioneers progressed throughout the eighteenth century. Continued interaction from the late seventeenth century on had a tremendous impact on the cultures of American Indians in the Central Plains, including the gradual introduction of the horse and other European material culture. This trade relationship became more permanent with the establishment of Fort Orleans west of St. Louis in 1723, a settlement that initiated a formal fur trade between the French and the Missouri and Osage tribes.[13]

The earliest recorded French expeditions in Kansas were concentrated along the Missouri River in the northeastern part of the state. In 1673, Marquette and Jolliet traveled up the Mississippi into the Missouri River corridor, mapping the area along the river. Territories west of the Missouri River are identified on their maps as belonging to the Osage, Missouri, Kansa, and Paniassa. Marquette and Jolliet's descriptions of the western territories were based on information conveyed to them indirectly by other informants. In 1724, Bourgmond, another French explorer, traveled to northeastern Kansas and made contact with several eastern Plains groups. He visited a Kansa village on the Kansas River, and the Padouca people near Salina. Like the Spanish before

[9] Waldo R. Wedel, "Archeological Remains in Central Kansas and their Possible Bearing on the Location of the Quivira," *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections* 101, no. 7 (1942): 10-18.

[10] Wedel, Kansas Archaeology, 20-23, 69; Wedel, "Archaeological Remains in Central Kansas," 1-24. It is not clear to which historic American Indians nation the 'Quivira' or 'Quecheros' are related. Wedel confirms that these protohistoric villages were flourishing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and later abandoned during the early American exploration of the area during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Other scholars have pointed out the similarities of the 'Quivira' and 'Quecheros' grass huts, to those of the historic Wichita. Manos and metates are stones that are used to grind grain and seed. A mano is a relatively small stone that fits in one's hands and a metate is a much larger, heavier stone, usually with a hollowed-out surface that contains the grain.

[11] Wedel, *Kansas Archaeology*, 24-25, 72.

[12] *Ibid.*, 25.

[13] Carl H. Chapman and Eleanor F. Chapman, *Indians and Archaeology of Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983), 99, 101-102.

them, the French explorers described a people who were semi-nomadic, practicing limited horticulture but mobile enough to follow herds for hunting.[14]

By 1700, evidence from a number of Great Plains archeological sites shows that European and particularly French material goods proliferated throughout American Indian settlements in Missouri and Kansas. On Osage sites in particular, European goods often outnumbered native material culture. This suggests that throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Osage and independent French traders were successful in pursuing trade, a relationship that most likely benefited both parties.[15]

EARLY AMERICAN OCCUPATION, CA. 1803–1854[16]

The American occupation of the area that was to become Kansas began in 1803 with Napoleon's sale of the Louisiana Territory to the United States. In the ensuing years, the new 'District of Louisiana' was under the administrative control of the Indiana Territory, later becoming an independent entity, the 'Territory of Louisiana' in 1805.[17]

Early American Exploration and Trading

The first formal exploration of the new American territory, authorized by President Thomas Jefferson and Congress, was captained by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. During their travels between 1804 and 1806, they likely passed through the area that would later become the northeastern corner of Kansas. In 1806, Lt. Zebulon Pike traveled extensively throughout the future state, particularly along the Arkansas River and north-central Kansas. Only five years after the purchase of the Louisiana Territory, the first American fur trading companies were established in the new territory. In 1808, the Missouri Fur Company was organized. Four years later they dissolved and were succeeded by the American Fur Company, which concentrated its efforts in the area that was to become Kansas.[18]

Between 1819 and 1820, Stephen H. Long traveled from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains. His expedition produced several regional maps. The High Plains of Kansas were labeled as the 'Great American Desert.' On one of his maps, adjacent to the fork of the Solomon River, Long noted that "the Great Desert is frequented by roving bands of Indians who have no fixed places of residence but roam from place to place in quest of game." This description of the larger region as a 'Great American Desert' was to guide the national impression of central and western Kansas for generations, and according to Miner and Unrau was one of the reasons that it was perceived as an acceptable homeland for dislocated eastern tribes.[19]

By 1820, the Missouri Compromise established that Missouri would be admitted as a slave state but that all future states west of the Mississippi and north of latitude 36 degrees, 30 minutes would be free. In 1823, the western boundary of Missouri was fixed. The first formal presence of the Federal Government in the area that was to become Kansas occurred with the establishment of Fort Leavenworth on the western bank of the Missouri River in 1827.[20]

Federal 'Indian' Policy

The fate of American Indians in Kansas during the second quarter of the nineteenth century was nearly identical to those in Missouri. Throughout the late 1820s and 1830s, American Indians were forced by Congress to leave their homelands in Missouri, Louisiana, and Arkansas and relocate to land that would become Kansas and Oklahoma. In 1824, the Federal Government began to formulate an 'Indian' policy that viewed the area that was to become Kansas as a convenient place to relocate displaced American Indians. This policy formalized a

[14] Wedel, *Kansas Archaeology*, 26-34.

[15] Chapman and Chapman, *Indians and Archaeology*, 90, 104.

[16] Information for this period of history in the project area and northwestern Kansas in general is scarce. This section therefore focuses on the larger context of regional exploration, American Indian displacement, and subsequent European-American settlement.

[17] Federal Writers' Project, Work Projects Administration, *Kansas: A Guide to the Sunflower State* (New York: The Viking Press, 1939) 511.

[18] *Ibid.*, 512.

[19] Wedel, *Kansas Archaeology*, 45; H. Craig Miner and William E. Unrau, *The End of Indian Kansas: A Study of Cultural Revolution, 1854 - 1871* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), 25.

[20] Federal Writers' Project, *Kansas*, 512.

transformation in the United States' relationship to American Indians from one that was based predominantly on trade, to one that was rooted in militarism and domination. By 1825, the Osage and Kansa, and, in 1833, the Pawnees, were forced to sign treaties with the Federal Government ceding part of their lands to make room for American Indians forced to emigrate from the east. In 1829, the Delaware were forced to settle in Kansas, and by 1832 the Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Kaskaskia, Peoria, Wea, and Piankeshaw were also settled on reservations there. The Federal Government formalized its Indian policy by declaring in 1834 that all territory west of the Mississippi, not including Missouri, Louisiana, and the Arkansas Territory, was to be 'Indian Country.' The American Indian groups that had historically occupied what would become central and eastern Kansas—the Osage, Kansa and Pawnee—were forced to cede a substantial amount of their territory for the accommodation of other Indian groups. Over the next nine years, various groups including the Sauk, Fox, and Iowa in 1836, the Miami in 1840, and the Wyandot in 1843 were forced to relocate to reservations in what would become eastern Kansas. As a result, by the mid-1850s a majority of this area was occupied by American Indian reservations.[21]

Continued Exploration and Western Migration

Throughout the 1840s, the first European-American emigrants entered the area that was to become Kansas. Well-established routes of travel, such as the Santa Fe and Oregon trails, allowed traders, explorers, and western emigrants to travel into and through the territory. The Santa Fe Trail was the principal regional route to the Southwest. Between 1842 and 1844, John C. Fremont led three separate explorations through what would become northeastern Kansas on his way to the west coast. These routes, a series of feeder trails leading westward, eventually became part of what is known as the Oregon Trail. In 1843, the first party of Oregon emigrants left Elm Grove, Kansas. By 1846, Mormons on their way to Utah, and later, in 1849, tens of thousands of emigrants on their way to gold in California passed through Kansas.[22]

In 1844, Congress passed the important Townsite Preemption Act that was to lay the foundation for eventual European-American settlement west of the Mississippi. This act allowed a corporate authority, composed of individual investors, to register a potential town site and hold it in trust for future occupants. As Hamilton has noted, this act also actively encouraged capitalist land speculation.[23]

CREATION OF THE KANSAS TERRITORY, THE STATE OF KANSAS, AND GRAHAM COUNTY, 1854–1877[24]

In 1854, President Franklin Pierce formally created the Kansas and Nebraska territories, an area extending over six hundred miles to the west of Missouri. This single act formally opened the Kansas Territory to European-American settlement. However, because the land had not yet been surveyed, none could be legally claimed. In July of 1854, legislation was passed which legalized settlement on unsurveyed lands. The territory's future as a free or slave state was to be determined by its resident voters. The year after the creation of the Kansas Territory, the Land Office Commissioner George Maypenny signed nine new treaties with American Indians in Kansas, reducing the size of their reservations and ceding more land to the United States. As a result, several million acres of land in eastern Kansas were legally opened to settlement.[25]

21 *Ibid.*

22 *Ibid.*, 513; Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society. "Study Unit on the Period of Exploration and Settlement, 1820s-1880s," in *Kansas Preservation Plan* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1987), 4, 11-13. The Oregon Trail passed through the northeastern part of Kansas, a considerable distance from the Nicodemus project area.

23 Kenneth M. Hamilton, "The Settlement of Nicodemus: Its Origins and Early Promotion," in *Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement in Nicodemus, Kansas* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Government Printing Office, 1986), 2.

24 Information for the pre-1867 history of the project area and northwestern Kansas in general is scarce. The early history of this section therefore talks about the larger context of Kansas Territory creation, migration and town settlement, and statehood politics.

25 Federal Writers' Project, *Kansas*, 513-516; Miner and Unrau, *The End of Indian Kansas*, 8-12; Lawrence B. Lee, *Kansas and the Homestead Act, 1862-1905* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 48-53.

Early European-American Settlement

See figure 4. Captain Seth Eastman's 1854 map of the Kansas and Nebraska Territories.

Throughout the 1840s, numerous squatters and speculators had begun to move into eastern Kansas, settling on reservation lands in direct violation of the treaties signed by the Federal Government. The Preemption Act of 1841 allowed squatters to settle on up to 160 acres of public land before it was surveyed, with the option of purchasing it afterward. By 1854, migration into the newly formed Kansas Territory was hastened. The town of Leavenworth was settled before a treaty was signed with the Delaware. After 1854, treaties with American Indians included rights-of-way for use of future railroads through territory they retained.

During the 1850s, some routes of the 'underground railroad' passed through the Kansas Territory even though it was not formally a free territory. Fugitives from slavery used this system to escape from slave states into free states. In Kansas, railroad 'stations' existed along a number of routes going west from the Missouri border for about sixty miles and then north into free Nebraska, other northern states, and Canada. An often-traveled route within Kansas was the Lane Trail beginning at Topeka. Named after James H. Lane, a free-state politician who traveled down the route from Nebraska in 1856, the trail was marked with stone piles set on hilltops and ran from Topeka through the southeastern corner of Nebraska and across the Missouri River into Iowa.[26]

At the same time the underground railroad was in use, abolitionists in New England organized to assist anti-slavery parties planning to settle in Kansas. In 1854, the first emigrant party left Boston to establish a town approximately forty miles west of the mouth of the Kansas River – this town was to become Lawrence, Kansas. This settlement encouraged more parties to settle in Lawrence and other towns like Topeka and Manhattan.[27]After several years of fighting between pro-slavery and free-state factions, the Kansas Legislature abolished slavery in 1860. A year later, Kansas was admitted to the Union as the 34th state.[28]

The years encompassing the Civil War were significant to the history and development of Kansas. In 1861, the Kansas Legislature adopted a quarantine law that prohibited entrance of Texas cattle that brought the Spanish or Texas Fever into the state and infected domestic herds. Generally this law applied to the more populated areas of eastern Kansas, but as settlement progressed westward, the boundary or 'dead line' was also moved west. In January 1863, the Homestead Act, passed the previous year, went into effect. This act allowed western emigrants who were already US citizens, or desired to apply for citizenship, to make and settle claims of up to a quarter section, or 160 acres. All a homesteader had to do to acquire title to land was occupy it, build improvements, and cultivate the land for five years. By 1863, the fate of the American Indians in Kansas was sealed as Congress authorized the removal of all native groups from the new state. An initial spate of railroad building, which began during the Civil War and lasted up to 1873, rapidly pushed European-American settlement westward.[29]

With the end of the Civil War, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution formally ended slavery in 1865, and the era of Reconstruction began. Two years later, the 14th Amendment to the Constitution gave African Americans citizenship. By 1870, the 15th Amendment to the Constitution gave black males the right to vote.[30]

American Indian Displacement and Post-War Migration to Western Kansas

Post war removal of American Indians and the subsequent American settlement of central western Kansas proceeded quickly. In 1867, the Ottawa, Miami and Wyandots were removed from Kansas to 'Indian Territory' further south, and by 1869 more than 8 million acres of former Osage reservation lands were opened to European-American settlement.[31]

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Kansas Legislature had passed laws that began to encourage settlement of the state's western lands. In 1868, the Kansas Legislature adopted a fencing law that required a

[26] Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, "Study Unit on the Period of Exploration and Settlement, 1820s-1880s," 15.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Federal Writers' Project, *Kansas*, 513-516; Miner and Unrau, *End of Indian Kansas*, 13-14, 27.

[29] Federal Writers' Project, *Kansas*, 513-516; Lee, *Kansas and the Homestead Act*, 18-19, 277; Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, "Study Unit on the Period of Exploration and Settlement, 1820s-1880s," 46.

[30] Federal Writers' Project, *Kansas*, 513-516.

[31] *Ibid.*, 517.

property owner to fence his land to protect his agricultural produce. This law essentially protected the ranching industry and raised the cost of settling in Kansas by making the property owner responsible for erecting fences. Two years later, however, the Kansas Legislature began to support the individual homesteader. In 1880, a law was passed requiring livestock to be herded and holding the owners liable for damages caused by errant livestock. During the same year, a general statute was adopted permitting county commissioners to adopt the provisions of the Herd Law in any county. This law prohibited the running at large of all cattle, horses, mules, asses, goats and sheep, etc.[32]

The first European-American settlement in Graham County is reported to have been made in May of 1872, by W. E. Ridgely, in the northeastern section of the county. Between 1872 and 1876, there were only seventy-five inhabitants reported in the county. The initial settlement of Graham County generally followed the Solomon River and Bow Creek in a westerly direction. Rivers and creeks were significant to initial American and European settlers because of their use as a water resource, and due to the proximity of fertile agricultural bottomlands. Rivers were also significant because railroads frequently followed the relatively level courses adjacent to them.[33]

Early Descriptions of Graham County and Northwestern Kansas

Few written accounts exist of early Kansas in the vicinity of what would become Graham County. In the early winter of 1861–1862, James R. Mead, a hunter and trapper, traveled north into the Solomon River valley from the Saline River and passed through western Rooks County. He described the general area as containing "numerous elk, antelope, and a few buffalo." Few hunters or American Indians were noted in the area during his brief stay.[34]

In 1867, Graham County, Kansas was established by the state legislature. Between 1867 and 1869, government surveyors laid the Section lines of Graham County and, in the process, described the intersections of the exterior boundary and subdivision lines within Township 7 South, Range 21 West (Township 7S, Range 21W), and Township 8 South, Range 21 West (Township 8S, Range 21S). (*See figures 5. and 6. General Land Office Surveys of Township Nos. 7 and 8S, Range No. 21W*) In 1867, the eastern boundary of Township 8S, Range 21W and the western boundary of Township 8S, Range 22W was described as gently rolling land with second-rate soil. "The line [between the townships] ...lies principally on the divide between the Saline River and the South Fork of the Solomon and is therefore very dry. It is gently rolling and may therefore be considered good 2nd rate soil. Stone is quite scarce and of an inferior quality of coarse limestone. No timber in the township." Between Section 1, Township 8S, Range 21W, which would contain the future Nicodemus townsite, and Section 6, Township 8S, Range 22W, the surveyors considered the bottomland first rate and the upland second rate for cultivation.[35]

The other exterior boundary lines of Township 8S, Range 21W and Township 7S, Range 21W were described similarly. Bottomlands adjacent to rivers or creeks were considered first rate and desirable but the upland areas away from the rivers were considered predominantly second- and third-rate soils. "The larger portion of the township [Township 8S, Range 21W] is rolling and broken prairie, 2nd and 3rd rate quality, not adapted to cultivation. The south branch of the Solomon River flows east through the township, the valley is generally level soil, sandy," and "We found no timber and no water except on line [between Township 8S, Range 21W and Township 7S, Range 21W] between Sections 3 and 34 where a spring branch about five links in width contains good fresh water."[36]

[32] Historic Records Survey, Division of Women's and Professional Projects, Work Projects Administration, *Inventory of the County Archives of Kansas, No. 33, Graham County (Hill City)* (1938), 3-5.

[33] Federal Writers' Project, *Kansas*, 517; William G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883) (www.ukans.edu/carrie/kancoll/books/cutler/graham/graham-co-p1.html).

[34] James R. Mead, *Hunting and Trading on the Great Plains*, 1859-1875 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 120.

[35] Government Land Office (GLO), Surveyor's Field Notes, Graham County, Kansas. National Archives RG #49, Microfilm Roll #135 Vol. 37, 48-49; #137 Vol. 41, 3-6; and #139 Vol. 46, 7-10. The surveyor's field notes as to the condition of the land in the vicinity of Nicodemus are fairly sparse. There is no evidence in their notes to suggest prior European settlement of the area.

[36] GLO, Surveyor's Field Notes, Graham County, Kansas. National Archives RG #49, Microfilm Roll #139 Vol. 46, 7, 10.

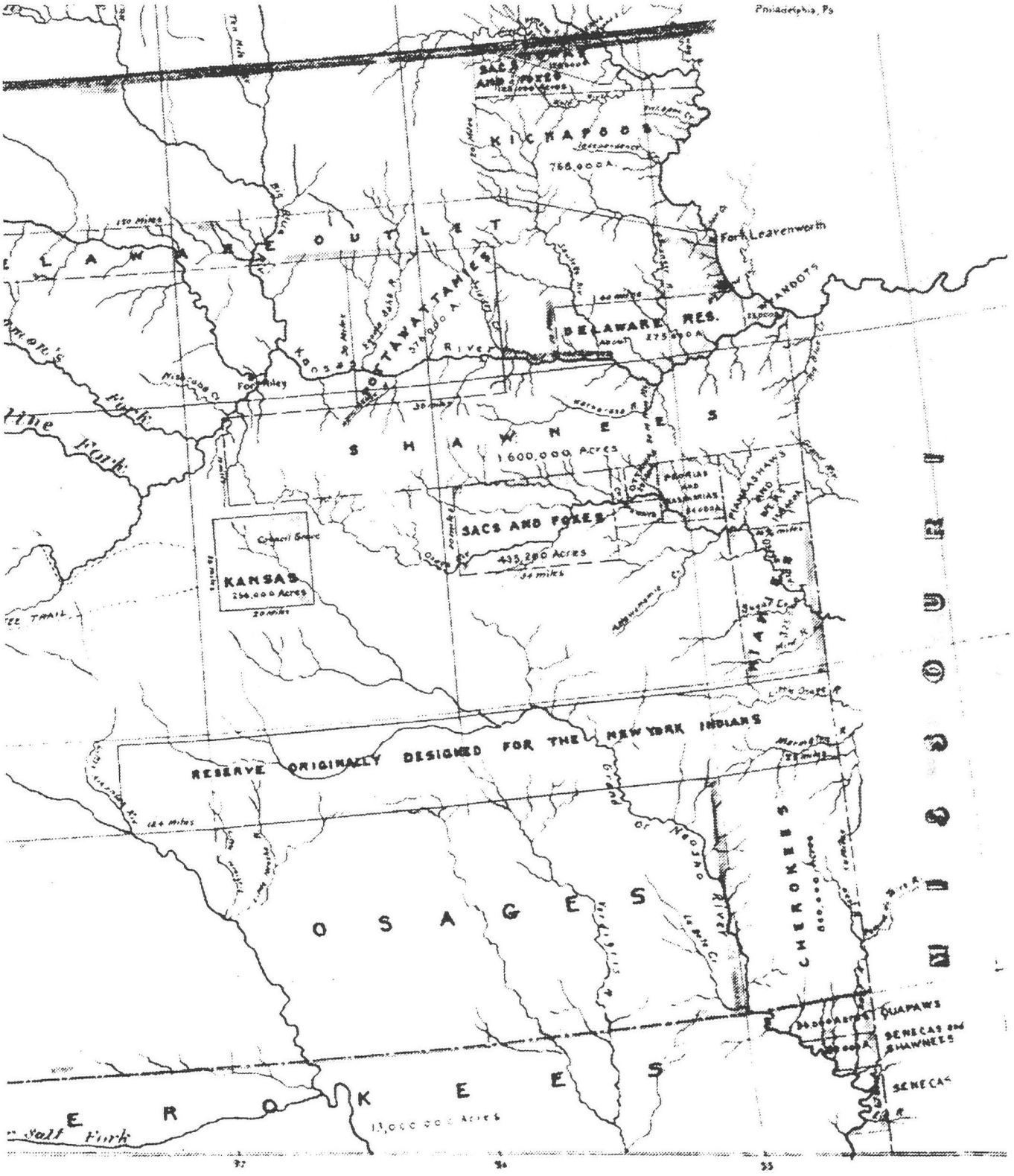


Figure 4.
Detail from Captain Seth Eastman's 1854 map of the Kansas and Nebraska Territories. The Nicodemus townsite would be located beyond the limits of the map to the west. (Source: H. Craig Miner and William E. Unrau, *The End of Indian Kansas*. Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978: 19.)

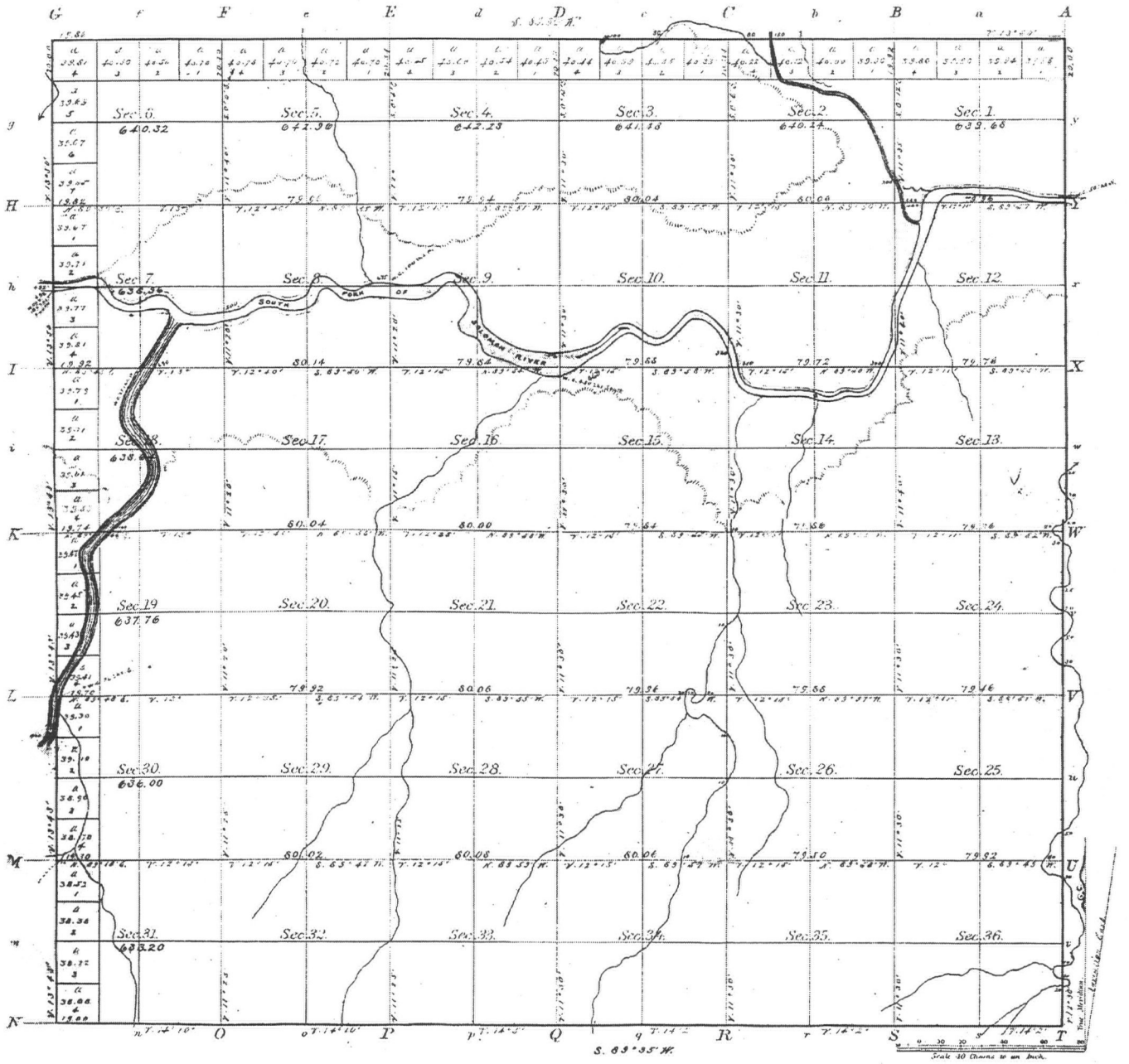


Figure 5.
1869 General Land Office survey of Township No. 8 South, Range No. 21 West of the 6th Principal Meridian, Kansas, showing the South Fork of the Solomon River, Spring Creek, and what would become the site of Nicodemus within Section 1 in the top right corner of the map. (Source: National Archives, College Park, Maryland.)

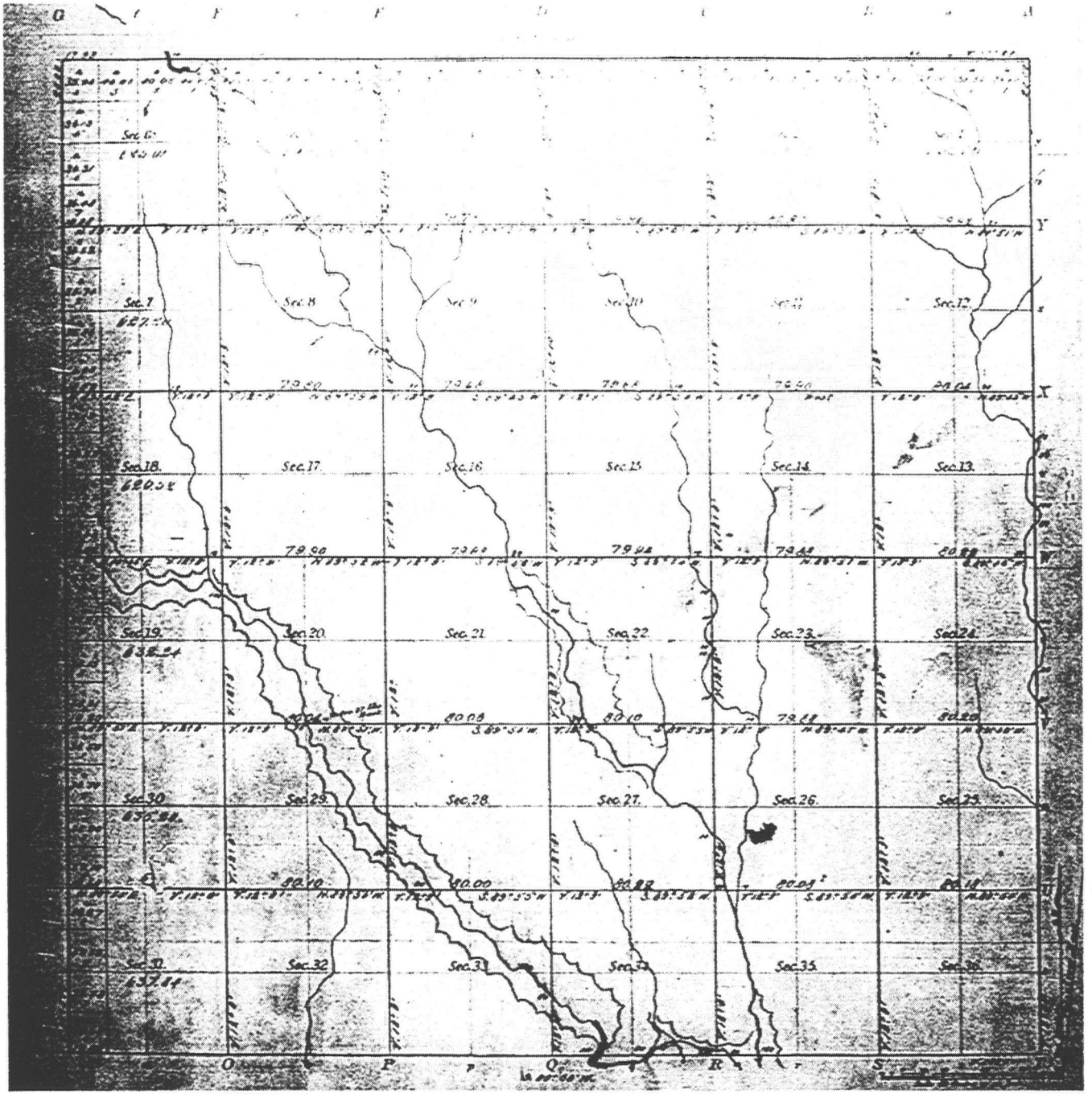


Figure 6.
1869 General Land Office survey of Township No. 7 South, Range No. 21 West of the 6th Principal Meridian, Kansas, including the northeastern half of the future Nicodemus Township. The Nicodemus Cemetery would eventually be located within Section 36. (Source: National Archives, College Park, Maryland.)

As the surveyors crossed and re-crossed the Solomon River and numerous drainages on their transect lines, their descriptions of the area's water courses were consistent. At the time of their survey, the Solomon River was eight to ten inches deep and 200 to 250 feet wide. The bottomland of the Solomon and its tributaries were described as having sandy soil. "No timber in the township [Township 8S, Range 21W] except some scattering of cottonwood and elm along the banks of the Solomon River." The trees noted along the banks of the Solomon were predominantly cottonwood, although some elm and willow were also noted.[37]

The only other resource noted in the area was stone. Outcroppings of limestone were noted along the banks of the river: "There is an abundance of limestone in that portion of the township [Township 8S, Range 21W] north of the river."[38] The quality of the stone was also recorded; south of the Solomon River, the limestone was noted to be of poor quality, north of the river the surveyors described the stone as of better quality.

It is significant to note that the surveyors contracted to lay the township and section lines described the region as possessing poor agricultural potential. As previously noted, this was in keeping with the decades-old tradition of describing western Kansas as a 'desert.' On several occasions, the land traversed while laying the subdivision lines within Township 8S, Range 21W was described as 'unfit for cultivation,' and 'worthless.'[39]

During the mid-nineteenth century, it was generally perceived that only the eastern part of Kansas Territory was farmable and that west of the 97th meridian was the 'Great American Desert,' a large expanse of grassy land unsuitable for most agriculture. By the mid-1870s, this area was pushed back to include only the lands west of approximately the 99th meridian, including Graham County. In 1875, General William B. Hazen described western Kansas as containing bleak prospects for farmers. "But at this meridian (98th) a very perceptible change takes place. The altitude grows greater, steadily, as we go west the soil becomes more and more arid, the native grasses shorter, the streams less frequent, and, after passing Fort Hays, we get beyond the country suitable for agriculture. This section, extending west nearly to Denver, is that known as 'the Plains.' It is a succession of gentle undulations without timber, and covered with buffalo grass, which is a short native grass, seldom growing more than two inches high."[40]

Even as late as 1881, the South Fork of the Solomon River valley was not described in the most ideal terms. "The valley of the south fork of the Solomon is not, beyond Stockton, the most fertile or beautiful body of land on earth. There is a proneness to sand; a tendency to cactus; a predilection in favor of soap weed. The 'magnesia,' as it is called, a sort of a compromise between a clay bank and a stone quarry, is quite apparent in the low bluffs. A few miles beyond Stockton, the timber suddenly ceases, and thereafter the Solomon is a miniature Arkansas [River valley]. There are the same low banks, the same stretches of yellow sand along the shores in the bends, marking the high water wanderings of the stream; the same heaped up mounds of sand held together by crane grass, scattered about the low ground."[41]

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NICODEMUS AND THE ARRIVAL OF 'COLONIES,' 1877–1879

Kansas Town Company Speculation

After the close of the American Civil War, many immigrants from Europe and other parts of the United States traveled to the Midwest. In Kansas, they met a gridded landscape set up along a township and range system. This system required land to be divided into townships—six square mile units—which were then subdivided into sections—one square mile units. Stakes and stones were set at each township corner, section

[37] *Ibid.*, 10.

[38] *Ibid.* This quote needs to be taken in the larger context of the survey of Township 8 South, Range 21 West. The surveyor's notes consistently refer to the quality of the land and its resources (e.g. soil, timber, and stone). There appears to have been a marked difference in the quality of limestone on the north and south sides of the Solomon near what would become the town of Nicodemus. Where the limestone appears to be of poor quality, likely referring to its suitability as a construction material, the surveyors made note. Likewise where the limestone appeared to be usable, this was mentioned as well. The fact that the surveyor made note of an 'abundance' of limestone strongly indicates that it had potential to be a future resource. The varying quality of local limestone for use in construction is confirmed in oral history interviews.

[39] *Ibid.*, 3.

[40] William B. Hazen, "The Great Middle Region of the United States," *North American Review* 121 (January 1875): 6.

[41] Clayton Fraser, "Nicodemus: The Architectural Development and Decline of an American Town," in *Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Government Printing Office, 1986), 37.

corner, halfway between section markers, and on section lines. Surveying along this grid system continued in Kansas through 1876.[42]

Private title to these newly surveyed lands was obtained in one of four ways: direct purchase, homesteading, military warrant, or preemption. Two sections of land were granted in every congressional township and set aside to generate revenue for local schools. Combined with the Morrill Act of 1862, these grants funded commons schools and institutions of higher learning. Almost one-sixth of the state was granted to railroad companies.[43]

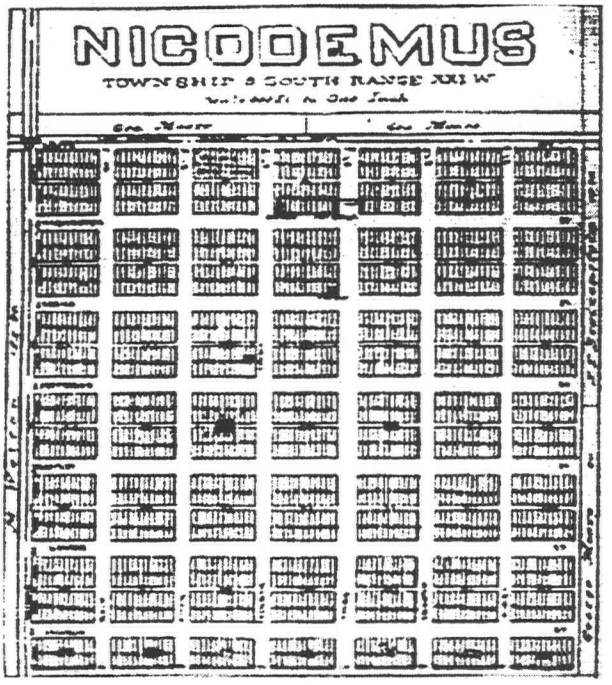


Figure 7.
Plat of the Nicodemus townsite. Note the regular lot and block sizes. Each block was 300' by 320'. Most of the lots were 25' by 160'. Streets were generally 80' wide, alleys 20' wide. (Source: http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/nicod.jpg.)

Town company speculation was big business. An organization of investors, a town company obtained its charter from the legislature to plat a town. The Federal Townsite Preemption Act of 1844 allowed a company to purchase up to 320 acres of land.[44]

Establishment of Nicodemus, Kansas

On April 18, 1877, a week prior to the formal end of Reconstruction, seven men, six black and one white, registered the Nicodemus Town Company with the Kansas Secretary of State for the purposes of developing and selling lots within the town of Nicodemus. These men, W.H. Smith, president; Ben Carr, vice president; S.P. Roundtree, secretary; W.R. Hill, treasurer; and Jerry Allsap, Jeff Lenze, and William Edmonds, trustees, had already been living in Kansas for a short while. Smith had originally come from Tennessee and all of the other black men had come from Kentucky. Hill, the single white man, was originally from Indiana.[45]

By June 1877, W. R. Hill had selected the future site of Nicodemus, a high bluff on the Solomon River's north bank, one half mile from Graham County's eastern border with Rooks County.[46] On June 8, the Nicodemus Town Company registered the site and filed a plat with the General Land Office in Kirwin, Kansas (*See figure 7. Plat of the Nicodemus townsite*). This registration gave the officers of the company the first option to buy the proposed townsite. Later that month, the Nicodemus Town Company was formally incorporated.[47]

According to the 1877 plat, Nicodemus, like most other western Kansas towns, was laid out according to a grid system. The formal town boundaries incorporated seven blocks east to west, and six and one half blocks north to south. The east-west streets were named after presidents—Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and Jackson Avenues—but also included 'South' street as the northernmost avenue. The north-south streets were numbered one to seven from east to west. Each block was to be divided by an east-west alley and was to contain twenty-four lots, twelve on both the north and south sides. Both residential and business lots were

[42] Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, "Study Unit on the Period of Exploration and Settlement, 1820s-1880s," 45.

[43] *Ibid.*," 46-47.

[44] *Ibid.*," 52.

[45] Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 2-3.

[46] The town of Nicodemus was located in the northwest quadrant of Section 1, Township 8 South, Range 21 West.

[47] Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 4.

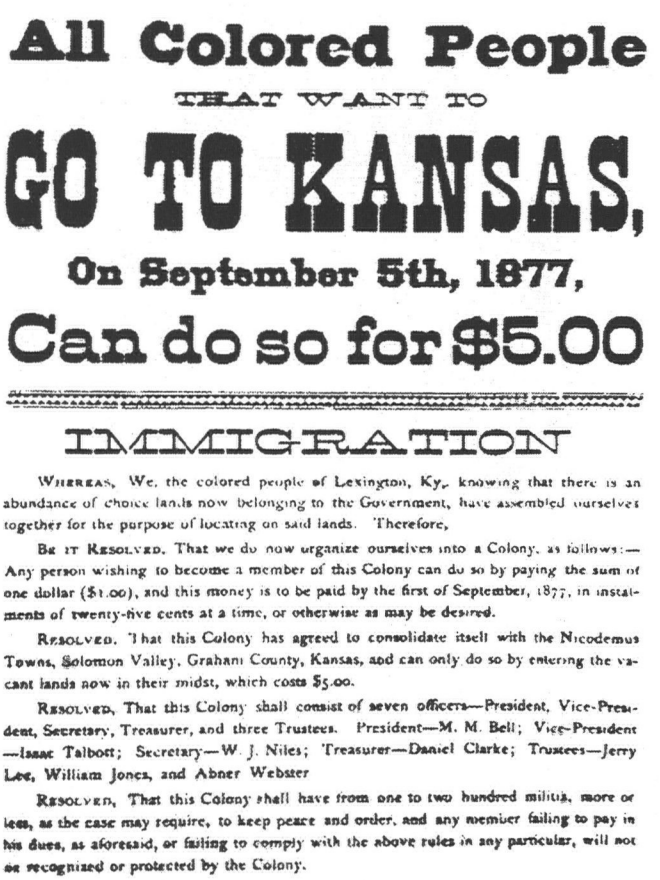
approximately 25 feet wide and 150 feet deep. The streets appeared to be of uniform width with the exception of First and Third Streets which were 20 feet wider than other north-south streets.[48]

The Naming of Nicodemus, Kansas

In 1877, the five promoters of the newest black settlement in Kansas christened their Graham County townsite Nicodemus. An 1877 handbill advertising Nicodemus targeted the Southern black population, quoting part of Henry Clay Work's popular song 'Wake Nicodemus!'[49] (*See figures 8. and 9. Handbills promoting black emigration to Kansas.*)

Born in Connecticut in 1832, Henry Clay Work was an avid abolitionist. A printer by trade, he published a number of wartime songs written predominantly for George Root's *Root & Cady* music publishing house in Chicago. Originally published in 1864, Work's lyrics for "Wake Nicodemus!" speak of the 'long weary night' and struggle for freedom, but also evoke the nearness and promise of the 'morning,' the 'good time coming' and the 'great Jubilee.'[50] (*See figures 10. and 11. Sheet music covers and lyrics, 'Wake Nicodemus!'*)

The direct reference to Work's song was relevant to the promoters of Nicodemus and their audience. According to Work's lyrics, Nicodemus was a 'slave of African birth,' a prophet who foretold the struggle for freedom and was 'never the sport of the lash.' Perhaps more important in the eyes of the promoters, the Nicodemus townsite offered the promise of the present: the opportunity for African Americans to escape the post-emancipation South and the oppressive state and local governments constraining them there. Nicodemus offered hard-working African Americans the opportunity to obtain their own land, to make a living farming, and to thrive in a jurisdiction that was self-governed by black citizens. In their 1877 handbill, the promoters of Nicodemus changed the last few lines of Work's chorus to reflect the particular landscape of northwestern Kansas, calling black settlers 'to meet us under the cottonwood tree, in the Great Solomon Valley.'



All Colored People

THAT WANT TO

GO TO KANSAS,

On September 5th, 1877,

Can do so for $5.00

IMMIGRATION

WHEREAS, We, the colored people of Lexington, Ky., knowing that there is an abundance of choice lands now belonging to the Government, have assembled ourselves together for the purpose of locating on said lands. Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we do now organize ourselves into a Colony, as follows:—Any person wishing to become a member of this Colony can do so by paying the sum of one dollar ($1.00), and this money is to be paid by the first of September, 1877, in instalments of twenty-five cents at a time, or otherwise as may be desired.

RESOLVED, That this Colony has agreed to consolidate itself with the Nicodemus Towns, Solomon Valley, Graham County, Kansas, and can only do so by entering the vacant lands now in their midst, which costs $5.00.

RESOLVED, That this Colony shall consist of seven officers—President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Trustees. President—M. M. Bell; Vice-President—Isaac Talbott; Secretary—W. J. Niles; Treasurer—Daniel Clarke; Trustees—Jerry Lee, William Jones, and Abner Webster

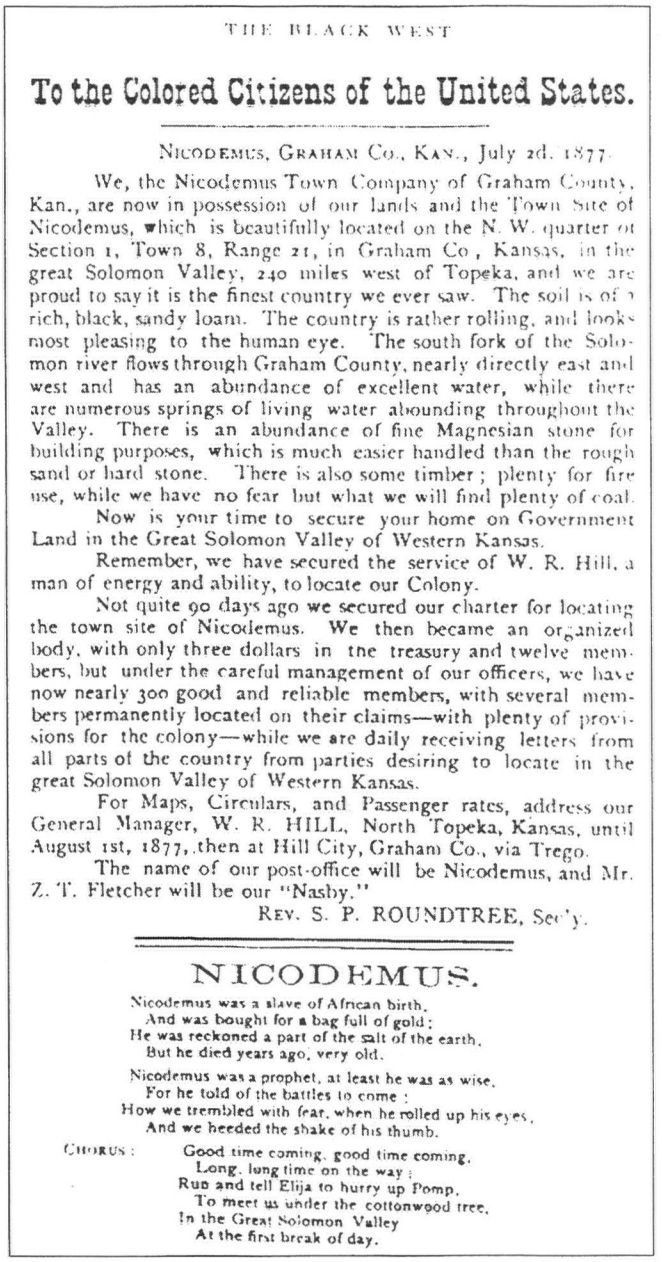
RESOLVED, That this Colony shall have from one to two hundred militia, more or less, as the case may require, to keep peace and order, and any member failing to pay in his dues, as aforesaid, or failing to comply with the above rules in any particular, will not be recognized or protected by the Colony.

Figure 8.
Handbill promoting black emigration to Nicodemus from the South. (From *Promised Land on the Solomon*. Source: Kansas State University, Minorities Collection, Manhattan, Kansas. [KSU])

[48] Fraser, "Architectural Development," 48-49.

[49] Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 5.

[50] Benjamin R. Tubb, "The Music of Henry Clay Work, 1832-1884," (http://pdmusic.org/work.html); Kathie Watson, "Poetry and Music of the War Between the States," (http://users.erols.com/kfraser/authors/hc-work.html).



THE BLACK WEST

To the Colored Citizens of the United States.

NICODEMUS, GRAHAM CO., KAN., July 2d, 1877.

We, the Nicodemus Town Company of Graham County, Kan., are now in possession of our lands and the Town Site of Nicodemus, which is beautifully located on the N. W. quarter of Section 1, Town 8, Range 21, in Graham Co., Kansas, in the great Solomon Valley, 240 miles west of Topeka, and we are proud to say it is the finest country we ever saw. The soil is of a rich, black, sandy loam. The country is rather rolling, and looks most pleasing to the human eye. The south fork of the Solomon river flows through Graham County, nearly directly east and west and has an abundance of excellent water, while there are numerous springs of living water abounding throughout the Valley. There is an abundance of fine Magnesian stone for building purposes, which is much easier handled than the rough sand or hard stone. There is also some timber; plenty for fire use, while we have no fear but what we will find plenty of coal.

Now is your time to secure your home on Government Land in the Great Solomon Valley of Western Kansas.

Remember, we have secured the service of W. R. Hill, a man of energy and ability, to locate our Colony.

Not quite 90 days ago we secured our charter for locating the town site of Nicodemus. We then became an organized body, with only three dollars in the treasury and twelve members, but under the careful management of our officers, we have now nearly 300 good and reliable members, with several members permanently located on their claims—with plenty of provisions for the colony—while we are daily receiving letters from all parts of the country from parties desiring to locate in the great Solomon Valley of Western Kansas.

For Maps, Circulars, and Passenger rates, address our General Manager, W. R. HILL, North Topeka, Kansas, until August 1st, 1877, then at Hill City, Graham Co., via Trego.

The name of our post-office will be Nicodemus, and Mr. Z. T. Fletcher will be our "Nasby."

REV. S. P. ROUNDTREE, Sec'y.

NICODEMUS.

Nicodemus was a slave of African birth,
And was bought for a bag full of gold;
He was reckoned a part of the salt of the earth,
But he died years ago, very old.

Nicodemus was a prophet, at least he was as wise,
For he told of the battles to come;
How we trembled with fear, when he rolled up his eyes,
And we heeded the shake of his thumb.

CHORUS: Good time coming, good time coming,
Long, long time on the way;
Run and tell Elija to hurry up Pomp,
To meet us under the cottonwood tree,
In the Great Solomon Valley
At the first break of day.

Figure 9.
Another handbill dating from 1877 encouraging blacks to relocate to Nicodemus. (From *Promised Land on the Solomon*. Source: KSU.)

It is not known from what context the historic Nicodemus was derived. Orval McDaniel's thesis on the history of the townsite suggests that the name Nicodemus may have been derived from an African prince who was brought to Virginia in 1620 and sold into slavery. As McDaniel states, this Nicodemus eventually purchased his own freedom and became known as the first slave to be set free in America.[51] The townsite's name may also have been derived from the Bible. The biblical Nicodemus was a Jewish Pharisee serving on the Sanhedrin, or Jewish high court, and was most likely a prominent religious leader. He was a secret follower of Christ and assisted in the embalming and burial of Jesus.[52] Work may also have drawn from a pre-existing body of early nineteenth century African-American oral history. This oral history strongly suggests that Nicodemus may have been a man of color. A mid-nineteenth century correspondent who attended 'a large meeting of colored people' referred to a preacher's sermon identifying the historical figure Nicodemus as 'colored.' "My bred'en, dere was in old times a great many preachers on de'arth who went about among de people. Many of dem was white preachers, such as Peter, James and John. Dere was also a great many colored preachers, and de greatest among dem all was de nigger Demus!"[53]

The popularity of "Wake Nicodemus!" may have given rise to a number of post Civil War minstrel songs that further strengthened, in both verse and picture, the image of Nicodemus as a freed African slave. These songs included J.B. Murphy's *Nicodemus Johnson* (1865), E. Mack's *Oh, Nicodemus* (1873), M.B. Lawry's *The Nicodemus Two Step* (1896), E. Asher's *Nicodemus and his Banjo* (1899), and Joseph C. Farrell and Hughie Cannon's *Possum Pie* (1904). (*See figures 12-14. Sheet music covers*) These minstrel songs were frequently cruel parodies of African Americans, but they were also social statements reflecting the contexts in which they were composed. For example, many of the lyrics from minstrel songs published in the mid-1860s through the 1870s reflect the en-masse departure of blacks from southern plantations, often pleading to freedmen 'Oh Nicodemus don't you go away.' Minstrel songs published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also frequently parodied the stock character 'Zip Coon,' a well-dressed black man

[51] Orval McDaniel, "A History of Nicodemus, Graham County, Kansas," (Masters Thesis, Fort Hays Kansas State College, 1950), 50. McDaniel's source for this biography of Nicodemus is cited as Nettie Craig.

[52] Kevin Knight, "The Online Catholic Encyclopedia," (http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11066b.html).

[53] *The North Star* (Rochester, New York), November 9, 1849. Information courtesy of Dr. Scot French, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Carter G. Woodson Institute for Afro-American and African Studies, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

attempting to 'put on airs' or rise above his station. These stock characters were often given the first name or surname Nicodemus.[54]

Promotion and Colonization of Nicodemus

See figures 8. and 9. Handbills promoting black emigration to Nicodemus.

The settlement and colonization of Nicodemus then began in earnest. On April 16, 1877, the first circular advertising and promoting Nicodemus appeared. The first settler to arrive in Nicodemus, on June 18, 1877, was the secretary of the Nicodemus Town Company, Simon P. Roundtree. Nearly two weeks later, thirty additional residents, primarily town officers and a few blacks from Topeka, arrived on July 30, 1877.[55]

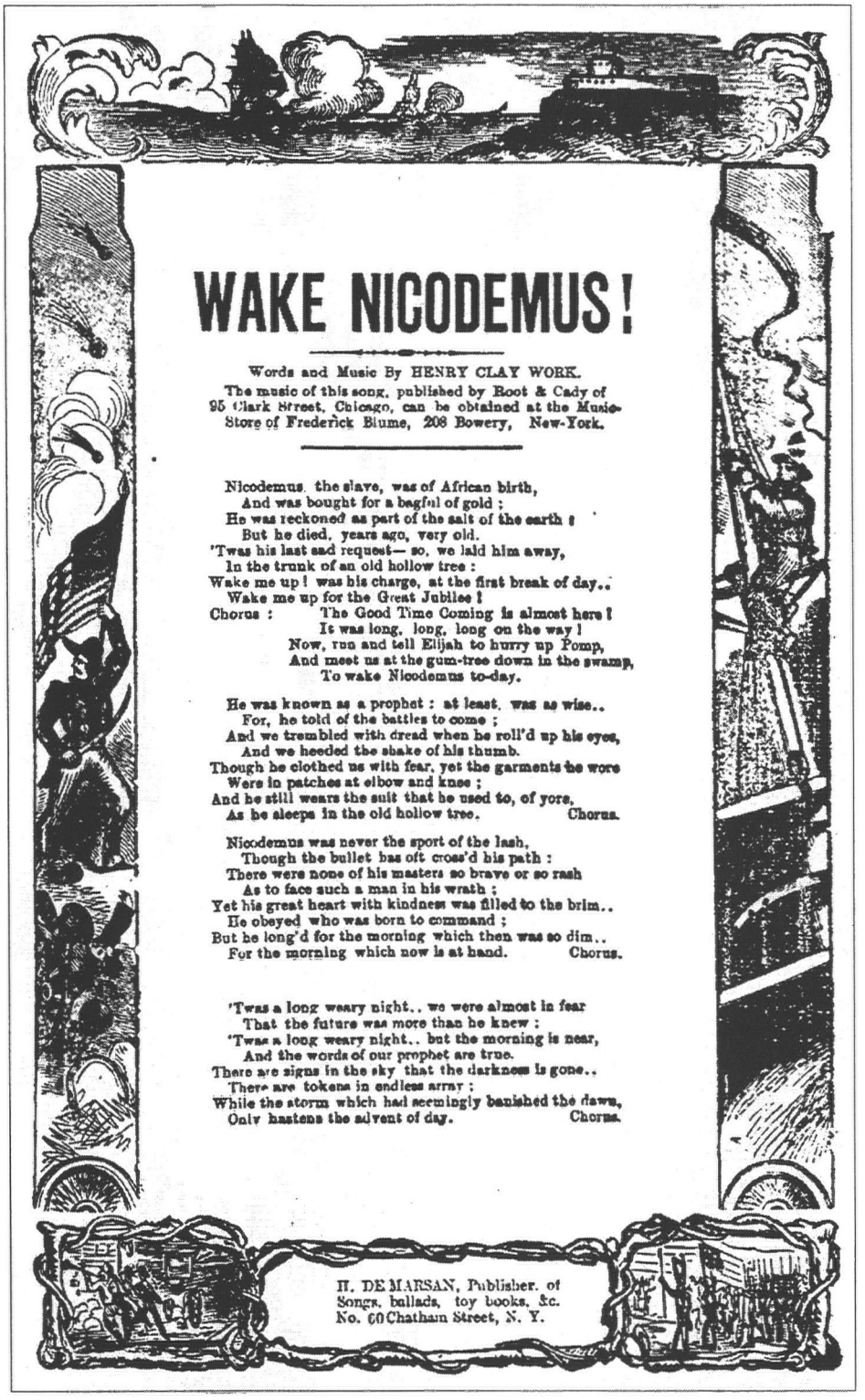
The promotion of Nicodemus was carried out by its officers and targeted a select group of African Americans, predominantly those who could afford to purchase lots and contribute to the future development of the town. Because of their connections to Kentucky, much of the promotion that took place during the late 1870s targeted blacks in the Lexington and Georgetown areas. As a promotional tool, publications announcing the formation
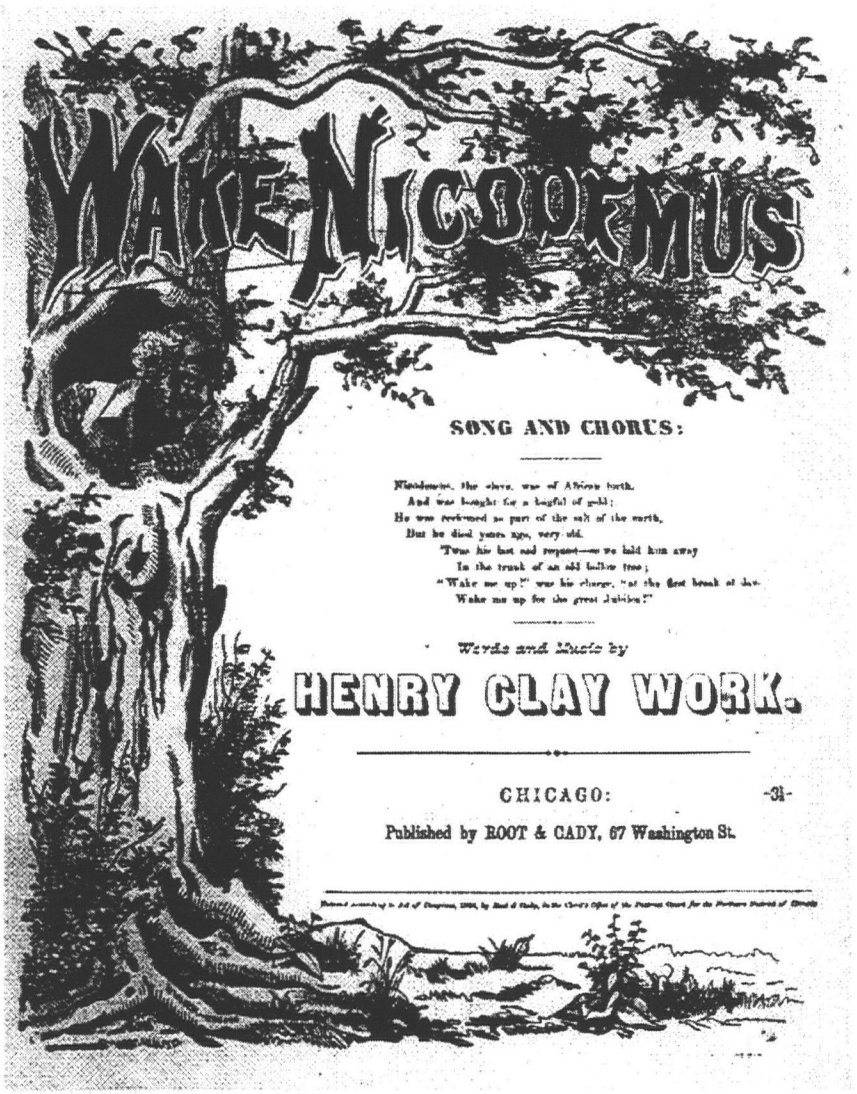


Figure 10.
Cover, sheet music for "Wake Nicodemus," published 1864. (Source: John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.)

[54] American Memory: Historical Collection for the National Digital Library, Library of Congress (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award97/rpbhtml/aasmhome.html).

[55] Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 5.



WAKE NICODEMUS!

Words and Music By HENRY CLAY WORK.

The music of this song, published by Root & Cady of 95 Clark Street, Chicago, can be obtained at the Music Store of Frederick Blume, 208 Bowery, New-York.

Nicodemus, the slave, was of African birth,
And was bought for a bagful of gold;
He was reckoned as part of the salt of the earth;
But he died, years ago, very old.
'Twas his last sad request— so, we laid him away,
In the trunk of an old hollow tree:
Wake me up! was his charge, at the first break of day..
Wake me up for the Great Jubilee!
Chorus: The Good Time Coming is almost here!
It was long, long, long on the way!
Now, run and tell Elijah to hurry up Pomp,
And meet us at the gum-tree down in the swamp,
To wake Nicodemus to-day.

He was known as a prophet: at least, was as wise..
For, he told of the battles to come;
And we trembled with dread when he roll'd up his eyes,
And we heeded the shake of his thumb.
Though he clothed us with fear, yet the garments he wore
Were in patches at elbow and knee;
And he still wears the suit that he used to, of yore,
As he sleeps in the old hollow tree. Chorus.

Nicodemus was never the sport of the lash,
Though the bullet has oft cross'd his path:
There were none of his masters so brave or so rash
As to face such a man in his wrath;
Yet his great heart with kindness was filled to the brim..
He obeyed who was born to command;
But he long'd for the morning which then was so dim..
For the morning which now is at hand. Chorus.

'Twas a long weary night.. we were almost in fear
That the future was more than he knew:
'Twas a long weary night.. but the morning is near,
And the words of our prophet are true.
There are signs in the sky that the darkness is gone..
There are tokens in endless array;
While the storm which had seemingly banished the dawn,
Only hastens the advent of day. Chorus.

H. DE MARSAN, Publisher, of Songs, ballads, toy books, &c. No. 60 Chatham Street, N. Y.

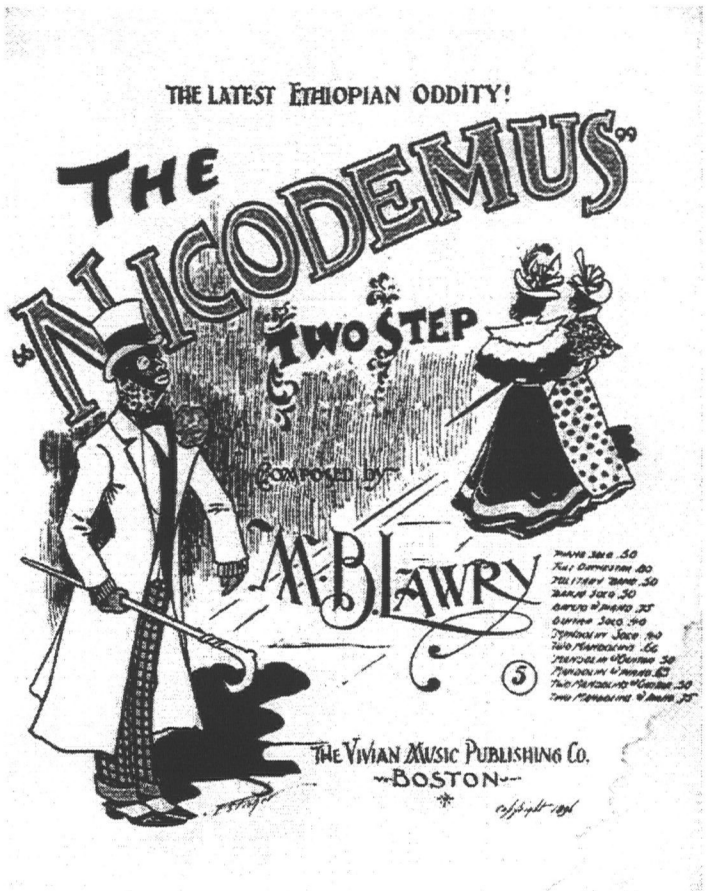
Figure 11.
Lyrics for "Wake Nicodemus!" date uncertain. (Source: Rare Books and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.)

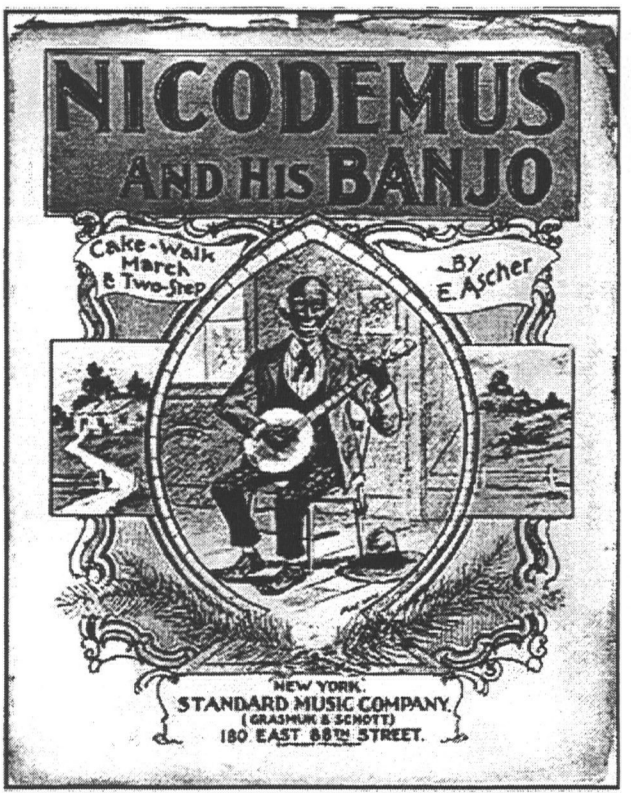


Figure 12. (top left)
"Nicodemus Johnson," sheet music cover "as sung by Charley Pettingill at the Morris Bors. Opera House," 1865. (Source: John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.)

Figure 13. (bottom left)
"The Nicodemus Two Step," sheet music cover, 1896. (Source: John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.)

Figure 14. (below)
"Nicodemus and his Banjo," sheet music cover, 1899. (Source: Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.)





of Nicodemus Colony naturally extolled its appealing location and positive benefits. In addition, because their sole purpose was to entice emigrants to the Nicodemus vicinity, they also tended to exaggerate local conditions and make promises that could not be kept. An undated leaflet (but printed prior to May 15, 1877) entitled 'The Largest Colored Colony in America!' claimed that, by September 1, the Colony would have houses erected and that all branches of mercantile business would be opened for the benefit of the Colony. A circular dated July 2, 1877, advertised the immediate area of Nicodemus as possessing "a soil ...of rich, black, sandy loam. ...[and] also some timber; plenty for fire use." In addition to the circulars, appeals were made in person to potential immigrants by Nicodemus Town Company representatives. Hill, Roundtree, Smith and Fletcher traveled to areas with specifically targeted black populations, including Topeka, Kansas, and the Lexington and Georgetown areas of Kentucky, and talked to audiences in churches and prominent social centers. In one Georgetown Baptist church, Hill promised the potential settlers that in addition to a homestead of 160 acres, herds of wild horses in the area could be caught and tamed for farm work and that wild game in the valley would satisfy all their needs for meat. The promises of plenty were enough to convince the first group of settlers to take a chance. On September 17, 1877, the first formal group of emigrants led by W.R. Hill, numbering 350 people, arrived in Nicodemus from Fayette, Scott and Bourbon Counties, Kentucky.[56]

Over the next two years, three more groups of settlers arrived in Nicodemus. The second group of approximately 150 members arrived from Georgetown, Kentucky in the spring of 1878. The third group of twenty-five arrived from Georgetown, Kentucky via Leavenworth, Kansas in the summer of 1878. The fourth and final group of fifty arrived in Nicodemus in February 1879 via Wyandotte, Kansas. Active promotion of the town ended in April 1879.[57]

A report issued by the State Board of Agriculture in Topeka described Graham County in 1877 and 1878. The County had an estimated population of 1,500, "600 of whom are colored, the latter being a colony from Kentucky." The county's natural resources were accurately described. 'A fair amount' of timber was located on "the streams, the yellow cottonwood predominating." The local building stone was quantified as plentiful "consisting of white magnesia limestone." Corn was the predominant crop farmed, with 2,500 acres under cultivation, more than twice the amount of wheat under the plow. Rye, oats, sorghum and millet rounded out the smaller grains. Beef cattle far outnumbered milk cows, and horses, mules and swine were relatively few.[58]

First Impressions

To most of the early colonists, the town of Nicodemus must have appeared bleak. There were no frame houses or marked streets, few domestic animals and little sign of activity. Willina Hickman, a member of the first formal colony, was not impressed with the Nicodemus scenery upon her arrival. After hearing the news that they had arrived in Nicodemus she recalled, "I looked with all the eyes I had. 'Where is Nicodemus? I don't see it.' My husband pointed out various smokes coming out of the ground and said, 'That is Nicodemus.' The families lived in dugouts. We landed and once again struck tents. The scenery was not at all inviting, and I began to cry." In addition, upon arriving from Chicago in 1878, Abraham T. Hall recalled, "Mr. Niles bade us look to the north, in the direction he was pointing, just beyond the fringe of trees, where we'd seen some black spots. That was 'Nicodemus.' I confess to feeling disappointed. I had never seen a 'dug-lur' nor a 'sod-up' and I had not the least conception of how either of them looked."[59]

As Willina Hickman described, not much of the early town of Nicodemus was visible in September 1877. Clearly Nicodemus had only a small population at this

[56] *Ibid.*, 5, 7.

[57] Kenneth L. Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 11-13; Angela Bates-Tompkins, personal communication, November 17, 2000. There is conflicting information about what parts of the country some of the colonists came from. Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit*, 11-13, notes, states that a colony came to Nicodemus from Holly Springs, Mississippi.

[58] State Board of Agriculture, Kansas, *First Biennial Report*, VI, 1877-1878 (Topeka: Kansas State Board of Agriculture, 1878), 463.

[59] Fraser, "Architectural Development," 38, 41.

time, but more importantly, much of the built landscape was below ground and therefore less visible on the flat prairie landscape.

Dugouts and Sod-ups

Because of the relatively treeless landscape, early western Kansas settlers turned to a vernacular form of architecture that utilized the plentiful 'buffalo grass' sod, the dugout and sod-up or soddie. Many Nicodemus residents who came with the early colonies adopted this architectural style. Sod houses were widely used in western Kansas prior to the railroad's arrival. Sod 'bricks' were stacked, forming a wall generally two feet thick. A sod roof supported by wooden poles covered the structure.[60]

A dugout was a structure built largely, if not completely, below ground; it was comprised of a hole in the ground usually cut into the side of a hill or bluff, and generally covered by a pole-raftered roof. Sod bricks were used for the walls, and saplings, branches, and brush underlaid and supported a layered sod roof. The floor was usually earthen. Most dugouts had only one entrance and few windows, often located at the exposed wall end. Dugouts were relatively easy to construct and required little experience to erect. They could be built quickly, with few tools, using entirely local materials. Many of the early dugouts featured "single or double-pen rectangles covered with shallowly pitched gables" built in a north-south orientation with doors facing eastward.[61] This protected the newly arrived residents from the harsh north and westerly winds. Interior and exterior walls were frequently parged in 'magnesia,' a limestone wash.[62]

Sod-ups and hybrids were frequently constructed. These structures differed from dugouts in that they were built mostly above ground but used the same materials and similar construction techniques as dugouts. Occasionally, hybrid structures incorporated one or more limestone block elevations (*See figure 15. Photograph of the Tuss-Lacey House, incorporating sod and limestone construction*). Each of these sod structures provided sufficient shelter for the early residents of Nicodemus, but all were leaky and dirty and frequently contained insects, rodents and snakes. In 1879, a Lawrence, Kansas newspaper described the earthen structures as "roofed with poles and brush, with a covering of earth sufficient to keep out the rain. As lumber floors were regarded as an unnecessary luxury, all the lumber required was for a door and its frame, and one window. A fireplace at one end, in most cases, takes the place of a stove, and serves the double purpose of heating and cooking."[63]

With the assistance of area farmers, the 1983 HABS study of Nicodemus identified the locations of several potential early dugout sites many of which were found south of Nicodemus along the bluffs overlooking the Solomon River and its tributaries. Clusters of sites were identified spread out over the landscape. This preliminary evidence suggests that early Nicodemus settlers may have created a "vernacular pattern very different from the formal grid of the townsite as it later developed on the ridge."[64]

The construction of a residence as visible proof of the occupation of land was a required part of the homesteading process. William Kirtley (*See figure 16. William Kirtley, 1943*) came to Nicodemus in 1878 and homesteaded 160 acres two miles northeast of what would later become the town of Bogue. After settling on a site, he entered a preemptive claim and worked the land

[60] Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, "Study Unit on the Period of Exploration and Settlement, 1820s-1880s," 62-65.

[61] In this reference, 'single and double pen rectangles' most likely refers to these structures containing one or two rooms.

[62] Fraser, "Architectural Development," 37-38; La Barbara Wigfall Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas" Interview with Bernice A. Bates (Historic American Building Survey [HABS] Project, 1983, photocopy), 13.

[63] Fraser, "Architectural Development ," 38. The main difference between a dugout and a sod-up or sod house is that the former was built predominantly below ground and the later was built predominantly above ground. Both examples used similar construction materials including buffalo grass sod.

[64] La Barbara J. Wigfall, "Waiting on the Dawn at Demus: Reflections on Historic Landscape Documentation," in *Sites of Memory: Perspectives on Architecture and Race* ed. Craig E. Barton, ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001), 153-154.

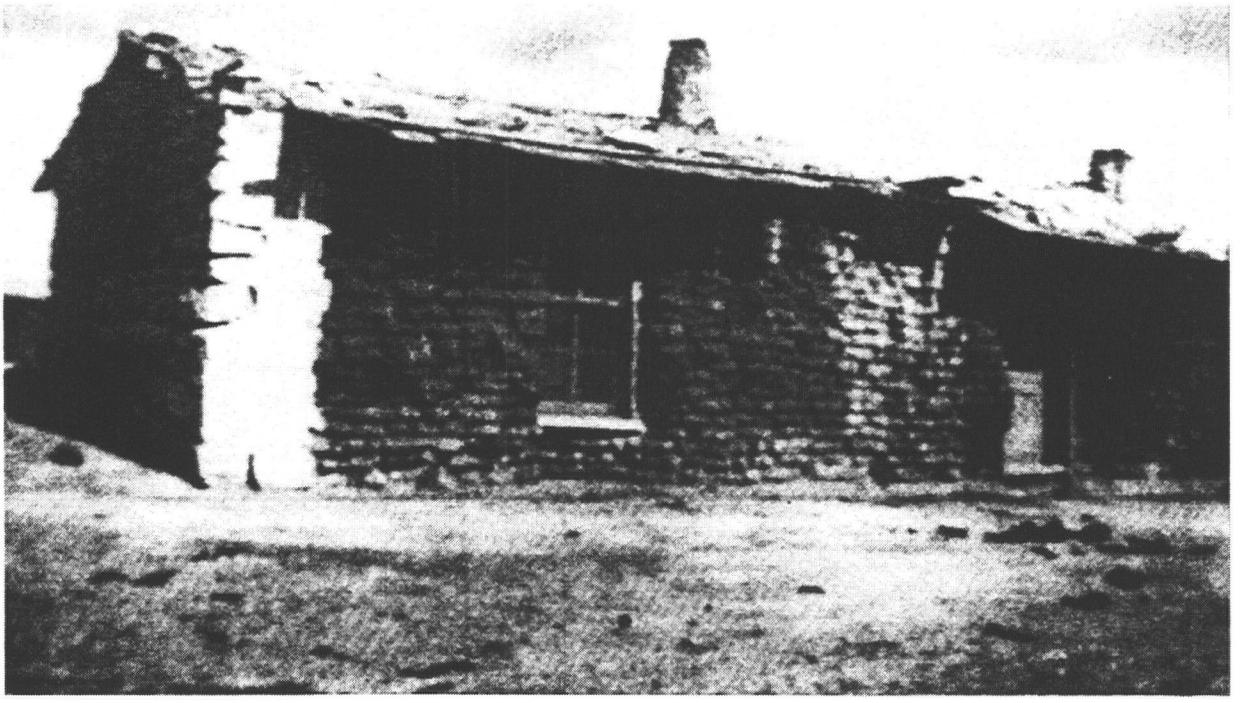


Figure 15.
An above-ground sod house near Nicodemus, that also incorporates limestone construction. Former Tuss-Lacey House. Date uncertain. (From *Promised Land on the Solomon*. Source: Ernestine Van Duvall.)

for six months. He then homesteaded in 1881, proved his claim in 1882, and received a deed for his land from the Federal Government in 1888. Over this ten-year period, Kirtley constructed and lived in three sod houses until he built a frame structure around the turn of the century.[65]

Physical Development of the Townsite and Township

For the first few years after the founding of Nicodemus, dugouts and sod-ups not only served as primary residences, but were also an integral part of the larger community fabric. Many sod structures also had multiple uses beyond residences, doubling as church sanctuaries, schoolhouses, hotels and businesses. In 1877, Zach T. Fletcher opened a general store out of his dugout on Spring Creek. Two years later, he relocated closer to town, constructing another dugout at the corner of Washington Avenue and Third Street. This structure also served as the town's first post office. By the late 1870s, two other men, Louis Welton and W.H. Smith, also opened mercantile businesses from their dugouts, but could not compete with Fletcher's general store. Nicodemus's first hotel was a dugout built in late 1877 or early 1878 and operated by A.T. Hall and E.P. McCabe. It was later replaced in 1879 by two more sod hotels, the Myers House and Union House. The Myers House, operated by the Reverend J.M. Myers, was located near Fourth Street, and the Union House, operated by Hiram Burley, was near Washington Avenue. Three of Nicodemus's first churches, two Baptist and one African Methodist Episcopal congregations, held services in enlarged dugouts. By 1879, each of these congregations had built a new, larger, aboveground sod-up structure. The Reverend Daniel Hickman and his Baptist congregation built a sod church a few miles west of Nicodemus at Mount Olive in 1879. As many as six local schools were also held in dugouts. In addition, when the Lexington Colony arrived in Nicodemus, colony members helped to erect an earthen structure for Henry and Emma Williams who soon gave birth to the town's first baby, Henry Williams *(See figure 17. Henry Williams, 1943)*.[66]

[65] William J. Belleau, *The Nicodemus Colony of Graham County, Kansas* (Masters Thesis, Fort Hays Kansas State College, 1943), 14-15.
[66] Fraser, "Architectural Development," 41.



Figure 16.
Mr. William Kirtley who arrived from Kentucky during the late nineteenth century. (Source: Belleau.)

Not all of the first domestic structures were made of sod. The first stone house in Nicodemus was built by Simon P. Roundtree in June 1877. A second stone house was built by John Anderson in September of the same year.[67]

By the spring of 1879, Nicodemus was a small but growing town and contained at least thirty-five dwellings, a general store, post office, hotel, real estate office, two livery stables, several schoolrooms, and two churches. A cemetery for area residents was laid out one mile northeast of town, on the border between Graham and Rooks Counties.[68]

In Nicodemus, early settlement appeared to cluster in the north central part of town, with fewer structures to the south. While some families purchased lots in Nicodemus, many settled on larger farms some distance from town in small clusters or communities. At least five satellite communities developed within the Township. Known early settlements included Fairview, two miles north of the townsite: Mount Olive, four miles west of Nicodemus; Kebar, southwest of Nicodemus; Tempe, a few miles northwest of Nicodemus; an unnamed settlement five miles southwest of Nicodemus consisting of the Napue, Samuels, Scruggs and Garland families; and Mulberry Grove, five miles north of Nicodemus in Pioneer Township. These satellite communities were essentially small congregations of families that later also supported schools and/or churches.[69]

Early Agriculture

Most of the early colonists who stayed on in Nicodemus settled on farms outside of town. During the first two to three years, the economic livelihood of Nicodemus's residents was not yet developed enough to support local shops and businesses. As a result, many businesses that started soon folded after only a short time. Farming, therefore, became one of the few means of support. The first two colonies to arrive in Nicodemus did not have any livestock and possessed little agricultural equipment. They also arrived too late in the growing season to plant crops. They were therefore forced to turn the prairie sod by hand with the agricultural tools they brought with them, mostly hoes, mattocks and spades. Despite the difficulty of such techniques, some homesteaders broke several acres of sod this way. One unidentified settler broke 12 acres of land and eventually planted two-thirds in corn, and another bordered his 160 acres with a four-foot-wide hedgerow dug by hand.[70]

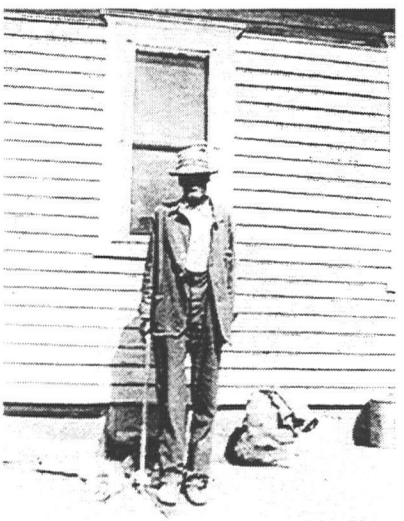


Figure 17.
Mr. Henry Williams, the first child born in Nicodemus. (Source: Belleau.)

[67] *Ibid.*, 42.

[68] *Ibid.*, 41.

[69] *Ibid.*, 38; Lula Craig, "History of Nicodemus Colony," n.d., 18, 39. Nicodemus Historical Society Collection, University of Kansas; Glen Schwendemann, "Nicodemus: Negro Haven on the Solomon," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 1, (Spring 1968): 26.

[70] Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 9.

After the arrival of new colonists with better equipment and teams in late 1878, many farms expanded their cultivated property. By the end of the year, an average of five acres per homestead had been turned. A year later, an average of seven acres per homestead was tilled. The *Lawrence Daily Journal* claimed that by the winter of 1879, Nicodemus residents "averaged from three to fifty acres of winter wheat each."[71]

CONFLICT WITH CATTLE HERDERS

In addition to all of the hardships that accompanied farming on the Kansas prairie, the early Nicodemus homesteaders had to address regular conflicts with cattle herders. Until 1877, Graham County was still included in the western Kansas area of designated quarantine for Texas cattle, and it was not until July 1880, three months after the political organization of Graham County when the Herd Law, a law prohibiting the running at large of horses, mules, cattle, swine and sheep was passed.[72] For at least two years after the founding of Nicodemus, herders frequently drove their cattle into homesteaders' fields, destroying crops. In 1878, at least six raids were carried out in the Nicodemus vicinity in an attempt to intimidate homesteaders. One dispute over watering rights on the Solomon River led cattle herders to take some cattle belonging to Nicodemus residents. In defense, the residents kidnapped a herder, holding him hostage until their cattle were returned. On recounting a trip from Ellis to Nicodemus, A.T. Hall remembered that "there was no settlement at that time anywhere in sight, from Ellis to Nicodemus, not even a cowboy have in view, although hordes of cattle were to be seen grazing in the offing." By 1879, even though many cattle still roamed Nicodemus Township, much of the open hostility and conflict had disappeared. A report by the State Board of Agriculture noted that the Herd Law in Graham County was "very popular. [It] encourages hedge growing and fence building, [and] stimulates the growing of small grains, but retards stock raising, particularly on a large scale."[73]

Founding of Emancipation Celebration

Despite all of the economic and agricultural hardships they faced, the earliest Nicodemus colonies organized the first 'Emancipation Celebration' in 1878. The Nicodemus Emancipation Celebration was a mid-summer social event that recognized and honored the emancipation of West Indies slaves by England on August 1, 1834.[74] It was traditionally celebrated during the first week in August after the summer harvest. In 1880, the Emancipation Celebration was sponsored by the Nicodemus Benevolent Society. Angela Bates-Tompkins has suggested that the Emancipation Celebration may have had its roots in the 'Colored People's Fair,' a traditional post-harvest social occasion practiced by African Americans in the South. The Colored People's Fair could have been brought to Nicodemus by some of its earliest residents. John Samuels and Tom Johnson, who arrived in Nicodemus in 1878 from Leavenworth, Kansas, were members of the local Benevolent Society chapter there. Historical research has documented that John Samuels originally came from a plantation in Kentucky where the Colored People's Fair was an annual event.[75]

[71] Schwendemann, "Nicodemus: Negro Haven on the Solomon," 18; Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit*, 16.

[72] Between 1855 and 1860, townships played a major role in the administration of local government. In 1859, the territorial assembly prohibited future 'political' organization (not establishment) of townships containing less than thirty-six square miles and 500 inhabitants. [Township powers were soon extended. Township electors raised money to support common schools; building and repair of bridges and roads; poor residents; and the prosecution and defense of legal actions and other proper charges against the township.] Provisions were made for elections, and supervisors were designated as commissioners of highways, overseers of the poor, inspectors of elections, and collectors of taxes. However, in 1860, the territorial assembly changed these procedures by abrogating the township powers and broadening those of the county tribunal over township affairs. The position of trustee replaced the offices of township supervisor, clerk, and treasurer. The position was to be elected annually, and approved by the county board of commissioners. The legislature of 1868 restored the offices of township clerk and treasurer, and continued that of the trustee. Nicodemus Township appears to have been organized on April 13, 1880, although the southern boundary was likely revised at least once before the Solomon River was settled on. County commissioner meeting minutes indicate that township boundaries were typically proposed and voted upon, but the rationale behind their location were not generally reported. In 1880 Nicodemus, one of the smaller townships in Graham County, was one of the most populous. If the organization of townships was based upon population, then the boundaries of Nicodemus Township were also likely based upon demographics.

[73] Historical Records Survey, Division of Women's and Professional Projects, *Inventory of the County Archives of Kansas*, 5; Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit*, 13; Schwendemann, "Nicodemus: Negro Haven on the Solomon," 22, notes; State Board of Agriculture, Kansas, *Second Biennial Report*, Vol. VII, 1879-1880 (Topeka: Kansas State Board of Agriculture, 1880), 287.

[74] This event was the first emancipation of slaves in the Western hemisphere.

[75] Angela Bates-Tompkins, personal communication, November 14, 2000.

Regional Work

Many of the early Nicodemus colonists supplemented farming with other work and relied on a variety of local, saleable resources. Finding no work in Nicodemus, many men traveled to other areas to take jobs, leaving their families and working for days or weeks at a time before returning home. Many men went east to Stockton and worked the railroad in western Rooks County. Others went west to eastern Colorado. Many also found jobs working on the railroad in the towns of Bunker Hill, Ellsworth, Ellis and Salina. These periodic trips from home saw the farm lands and homesteads around Nicodemus stand idle for periods and then improve and expand sporadically as money, labor and resources became available.[76]

Three miles north of Nicodemus a road called the old Stockton Trail led due east twenty miles to Stockton, the nearest town of any size.[77] This was the road that many Nicodemus men took to find work. While away from their homes, the men needed places to stay. Schwendemann has noted that "near the town of Stockton, was a bluff that ran along Dibble Creek and in the face of this bluff were a great many caves. These were used temporarily, and sometimes all winter, by the Nicodemus colored people in their journeys to and from their homes in search of work." A long-time resident of Nicodemus, Ora W. Switzer, also remembered the Dibble Creek caves as a place where blacks could stay if they got stuck late at night.[78]

Natural Resources

The natural resources of the area were also extensively utilized by the early Nicodemus colonists. In addition to the sod, wood and stone used in the construction of houses, dried cow chips and corn cobs were burned as fuel for heat, and buffalo bones were collected from the surrounding plains and sold for six dollars per ton.[79] Only five years old when her parents arrived in Kansas from Kentucky, Virginia Hackett remembered "how we used to trap sparrows and prairie dogs for food."[80]

THE BOOM YEARS: COMMERCIAL NICODEMUS, 1879–1888

See figures 18. and 19. 1880s maps of Graham County. Also, figure 22. Historic Period Plan, Nicodemus townsite, ca. 1879–1888.

The years following the Civil War marked a boom period for Kansas. Veterans of the Union Army who received bonus land, newly freed African Americans, and European immigrants settled in the state and dramatically boosted its population. Throughout the late nineteenth century, settlement generally proceeded westward across the state. The construction of railroads and the presence or lack of water resources stimulated town settlement, population growth, and contributed to the east-west settlement pattern. As the miles of railroad crept across the state, so did farms and towns, making it possible to sell crops and livestock to Eastern cities. Beef and winter wheat quickly became popular and profitable.[81]

With the arrival of the last of the formal colonies, the population of Nicodemus swelled. Even after many disheartened colonists left Nicodemus, its population (through 1878) was abnormally high due primarily to its role as a way station for both white and black settlers who were passing through. By 1878, the population of Nicodemus Township, which included the town of Nicodemus and its surrounding rural homesteads, was approximately 600. However, shortly thereafter, the

76 Schwendemann, "Nicodemus: Negro Haven on the Solomon," 17-18; Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 8; Railroads continued to provide seasonal work for the men of Nicodemus throughout the 1880s. Newspaper accounts from 1887 and 1888 document that 'our boys' worked on the railroad in Jewel County, the Rock Island Railroad in Philips County, and on the railroad at Bogue as well.

77 This road was surfaced with blacktop in 1937 and renamed Highway 24. It was later realigned south to the northern border of the Town of Nicodemus in 1964. See La Barbara W. Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," in *Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Government Printing Office, 1986), 81, note 5.

78 Schwendemann, "Nicodemus: Negro Haven on the Solomon," 20; Jennifer Michael, "Everyday Life in Nicodemus," Interview with Ora W. Switzer, 1996 (Report on fieldwork conducted by Jennifer Michael, Ph.D. for the National Council for the Traditional Arts and the National Park Service, 1999), 176.

79 Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit*, 14.

80 "Wheat Town: Historic Nicodemus is center of Kansas area where Negro Farmers grow rich grain crop," *Ebony* 5, no. 12 (October 1950): 32.

81 Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, "Study Unit on the Period of Rural/Agricultural Dominance, 1865–1900," in *Kansas Preservation Plan* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1984), I-12.

population began to rapidly decline. In 1880, the population of Nicodemus Township and the town of Nicodemus was 316, 58 of whom were white.[82]

Between 1868 and 1879, Graham County was attached to Ellis County for judicial purposes. During 1879, Graham County was detached from Ellis and reattached to Rooks County. Rooks County was significant to Nicodemus Township residents because it contained the closest large town and by the 1880s was the western terminus for the Central Branch railroad. In addition to receiving commercial goods from Stockton, many Nicodemus residents commuted to and from this town to find jobs during their first few years in northwestern Kansas. After petitioning Rooks County to organize as a separate entity, a vote took place in early 1880 in the Town of Nicodemus to elect county officials. Graham County became formally organized by the Governor of Kansas on April 1, 1880.[83]

Early Structures in the Townsite and Township

See figures 20. and 21. 1885 photograph of the Nicodemus townsite; photograph of the Bates family, early homesteaders.

Fraser has characterized the period from 1879 on as the time when Nicodemus began to 'rise out of the ground.' This reflects the construction by this year of several new buildings in what would soon become the commercial center of Nicodemus. Underlying the new construction of more permanent and physically imposing structures, were improved agricultural production and an increasing population. These two significant factors supported the expansion of business in Nicodemus.[84]

Taking advantage of the expanding economic base of Nicodemus Township, and buoyed by a majority white population in larger Graham County, white merchants

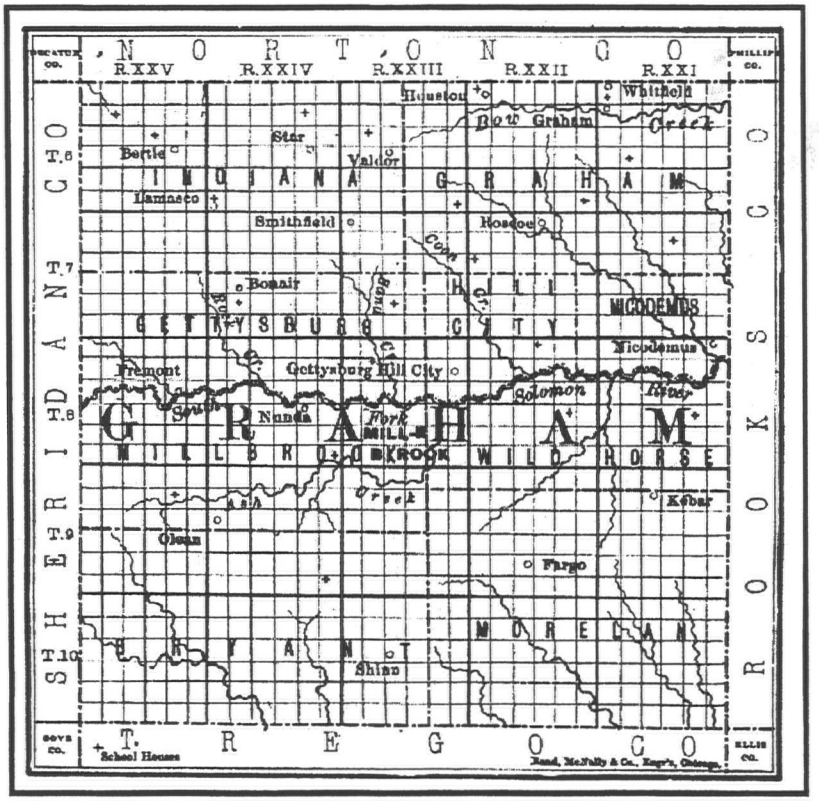


Figure 18.
1883 map of Graham County from William Cutler's *History of the State of Kansas*. Note the boundaries of the townships, including Nicodemus Township. Nicodemus appears to be one of the smallest townships within the county. (Source: http://raven.cc.ukans.edu/carnie/kancoll/graphics/maps/graham.htm)

[82] Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 14-15.

[83] Historical Records Survey, Division of Women's and Professional Projects, *Inventory of the County Archives of Kansas*, no. 33, 3-5.

[84] Fraser, "Architectural Development," 42.

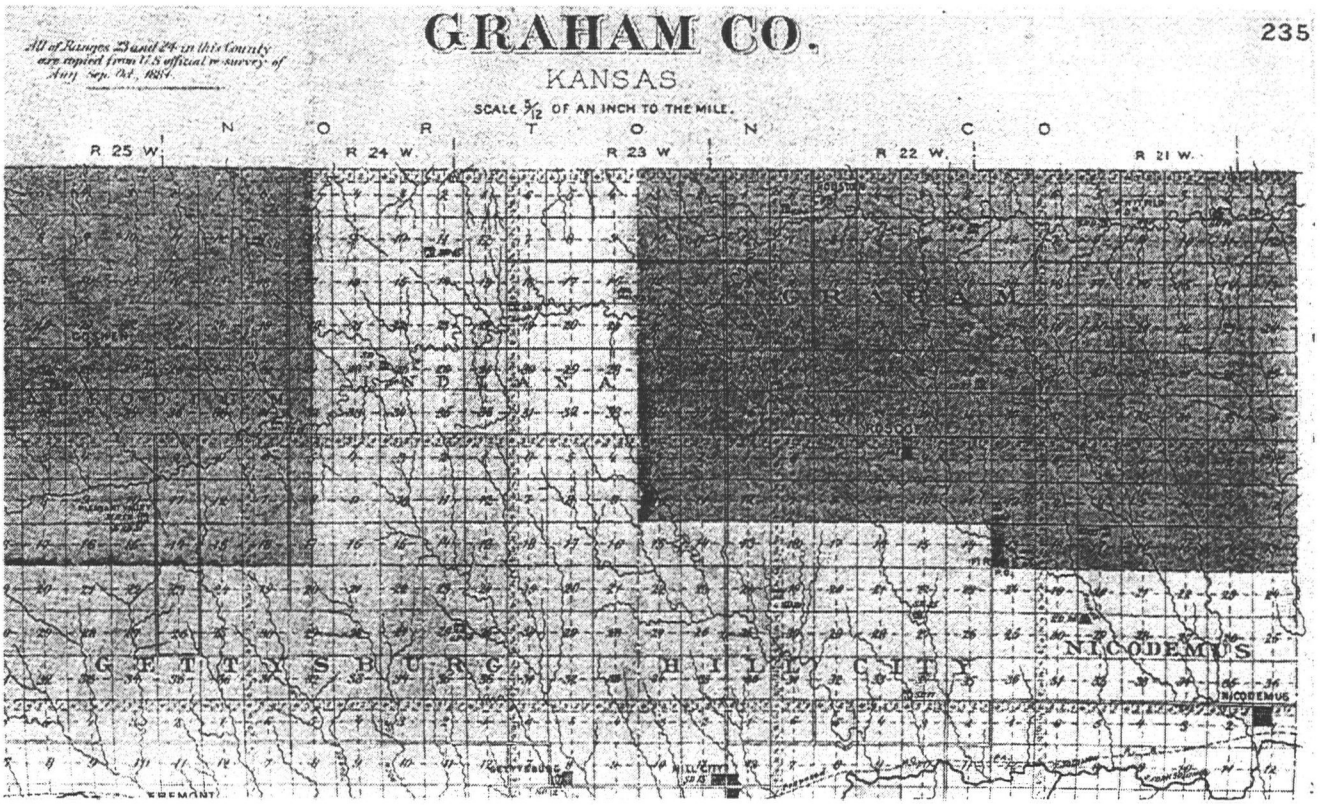


Figure 19.
Detail, ca. 1884 atlas of Graham County showing township configurations with later addition of proposed rail route leading to Nicodemus. (Source: Kansas State Historical Society [KSHS], Topeka, Kansas)

began to notice Nicodemus's potential as a commercial center. In 1879, the first three white merchants, S.G. Wilson, William Green, and C.W. Newth, moved to town and eventually erected substantial commercial structures and residences in Nicodemus. In late 1879, S.G. Wilson built a two-story cut stone general store on the northwest corner of Washington Avenue and Third Street. Early in the next year, William Green built a similarly styled general store across Third Street on the northeast corner. Likewise in 1880, C.W. Newth built a single story frame drugstore west of Wilson's along Washington Avenue. The establishment of these three businesses led to the development of the intersection of Washington Avenue and Third Street as the commercial center of Nicodemus. Over time, this intersection became known as the 'public square,' and Washington Avenue was commonly referred to as 'Main Street.' Fortuitously, Nicodemus was also able to attract a lumber merchant, B.S. White, who opened a limited stock store in late 1879.[85]

During 1880, the small social and commercial center of Nicodemus continued to grow. Two churches were erected in this year. Only a year after building a new sod-up church in town, the Reverend Silas M. Lee and his First Baptist congregation built a single story, stone church on the northeast corner of Washington Avenue and Fourth Street which was completed in May of 1880. At about the same time, John W. Niles constructed the single story stone 'Douglass House Hotel' on the corner of Second Street and Adams Avenue. The Douglass House Hotel was purchased only a few months later by Anderson Boles and renamed the Boles House. Other houses known to be constructed during this year were S.G. Wilson's stone house on the northwest corner of Third Street and Adams Avenue, later occupied and

[85]*Ibid.*; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, August 17, 1887, 1.

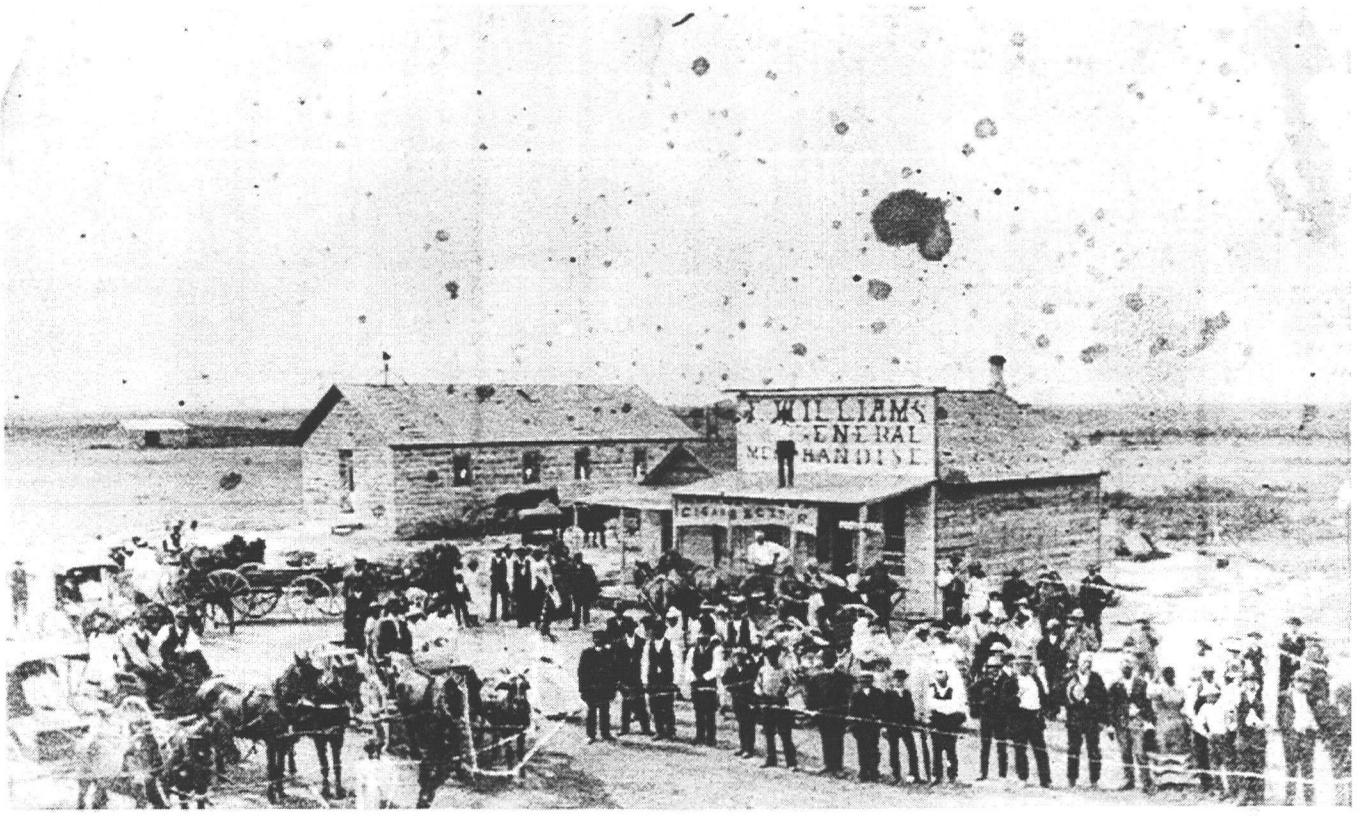


Figure 20.
A ca. 1885 view of Nicodemus, Kansas, showing the original First Baptist Church and the Williams General Merchandise store. (From *Promised Land on the Solomon*. Source: KSHS.)

renovated by the Mount Pleasant or 'second' Baptist Church in 1897, and C.H. Newth's frame house north of S.G. Wilson's store. Also during this first year of significant expansion, a public well was dug at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Third Street in 1881.[86]

In 1881, Zach T. Fletcher built a two-story, limestone hotel on the south side of Washington Avenue, east of the public square. He and his brother Thomas named the establishment the St. Francis Hotel. By spring of 1886 they finished construction in the rear of the lot of a livery stable and corral which was described as 'one of the finest in the country.' The St. Francis Hotel was designed with a living and dining area on the first floor and two guestrooms on the second floor. A kitchen wing adjoined the main structure to its east. The St. Francis Hotel soon became the premier hotel in town, and by 1885, the only one. In September 1887, it received a new asbestos roof. By December of the same year, preparations were being made to add another wing to the hotel. In June 1888, the St. Francis Hotel reopened with a new addition. The Fletcher-Switzer House, as the hotel is known today, is now part of the Nicodemus National Historic Site (NHS).[87]

[86] Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 15-16; Fraser, "Architectural Development," 46; *Western Cyclone*, June 10, 1886, 3. Three separate newspapers served the Nicodemus community in the 1880s. The *Western Cyclone* was established in May 1886 and was published through December 1887. Its competitor, the *Nicodemus Enterprise*, was begun in August 1887. The *Nicodemus Enterprise* was eventually succeeded by the *Nicodemus Cyclone* in December 1887. The *Nicodemus Cyclone* was published through September 1888. According to several oral history interviews conducted in 1983, the First Baptist Church divided soon after completing its new stone church in 1880. The new second, or Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, moved into the current African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1897. This church was later turned over to the Methodists ca. 1910-1912. The church was eventually closed down ca. 1947.

[87] Fraser, "Architectural Development," 46-47; *Western Cyclone*, May 13, 1886, 2; *Western Cyclone*, September 2, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, September 16, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, December 2, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, June 22, 1888, 2, 4; Schwendemann, "Nicodemus: Negro Haven on the Solomon," 28.



Figure 21.
The Bates, early homesteaders, near Nicodemus, date uncertain. (From *Promised Land on the Solomon*. Source: Irvin and Minerva Sayers.)

During the mid-1880s, a substantial amount of new construction occurred in and around the Nicodemus commercial district. By this time, milled lumber was easily obtained from regional lumber yards. In early 1886, Eliza Smith began the construction of a hotel on the corner of Second Street and Washington Avenue. The 'Gibson House' was a thirty-foot-square, two-story, stone structure containing eleven guest rooms. It had an attached dining room and detached barn and livery stable behind it. Smith sold the Gibson House a year later to David Williams and Samuel Garland who renamed it the 'Commercial House.' The hotel was sold again the following year and renamed the Fisher Hotel. In November 1886, Harvey Henry, who was operating out of the S.G. Wilson building, began construction on a new general merchandise store, a twenty-five by forty foot one-story stone structure on the south side of Washington Avenue across from the Baptist Church. Barns were also constructed to the rear of the lot. In June 1887, the new store opened for business.

Across from Henry's store, on the north side of Washington Avenue, Foster Williams occupied a small store. After excavating an adjacent cellar in April 1887, he began the construction of a new, more substantial general merchandise store, a twenty by twenty-five-foot single-story, frame structure with a false front façade. In late 1886, A.L. McPherson purchased a small, frame building on Washington Avenue. He eventually ordered a safe, remodeled the building, and by the end of the year, the Bank of Nicodemus was open for business. Other buildings known to have been constructed between 1886 and 1887 were F.G. Greebles meat market on Main Street east of the barbershop, J.W. Glazier's carpentry shop in the southwestern part of town, Charles Wilson's barbershop, Mrs. Warner's millinery shop west of S.G. Wilson's store, the Parrish hardware store on east Main Street, the Frank Borin farm implement store, the Taylor and Borin livery, the Zach T. Fletcher furniture and general merchandise store on south Main Street, the J.P. Crowley store on the corner of Second Street and Washington Avenue, Charles Duvall's meat market and

bakery west of Rinehart & Co.'s drug store on the west side of town, T.W. Sample's stone building and barn on Main Street, David Williamson's new Joint Stock Company's store south of the Baptist Church, H.C. Hawkins frame building on Main Street in front of the Commercial Hotel and east of the bank, A. Young's blacksmith shop west of Welton's livery barn, and William Scott's blacksmith shop west of the Joint Stock Company's building.

By mid-1886, at least twenty-five to thirty new buildings were under construction and the town possessed at least fifteen stone buildings, fourteen farm buildings, seven sod structures housing thirty-six people, a newspaper, a school, a post office, a land company, a bank, a society hall, two churches, two hotels, and two stables. In addition, several stores sold groceries, drugs, millinery and dresses, furniture, feed and general merchandise. In late 1886, the town of Nicodemus could boast of 150 permanent residents. By the end of the 1880s, the Nicodemus commercial district had grown from its nexus at Washington Avenue and Third Street to extend two blocks in either direction along Washington Avenue between Second and Fourth Streets. The intersections of Washington Avenue and Second and Fourth Streets soon became secondary commercial centers.[88]

The first school in Graham County was established in Nicodemus in 1879. Between 1879 and 1887, classes had been held in various dugouts or sod houses and were first taught by Mrs. Fletcher. In September 1887, the residents of Nicodemus began construction on the first formal school house, Nicodemus School District No. 1, a two-story, thirty-six by forty foot, four room frame structure located west of Fourth Street near the center of town. The school's first term was directed by J.E. Porter, a former principal of Leavenworth High School. By December 1887, the school was outfitted with a bell. The following April, students planted 'a number of trees' around the school grounds.[89]

By the mid-1880s, two more churches had constructed buildings in town. Sometime between 1881 and 1886, the Free Methodist congregation led by Lewis Welton built a structure in town. During 1887, the Free Methodist church was blown down during a cyclone, leaving the town with just two church buildings. In 1887, C.H. Brown and his African Methodist Episcopal congregation had raised enough money to begin construction of a new church "in the southwestern part of town." It had a stone foundation and frame superstructure. By August, services were being held in the new church.[90]

Due to the general lack of trees in the Nicodemus vicinity, residents heated their homes and business with anything that could burn such as cow chips, corn stalks, and wood salvaged along the Solomon. In late 1887, two coal yards were opened in Nicodemus. "J.W. Griffin is putting up a pair of scales in the west part of town and he will handle coal and do a general weighing business." "J.C. Parrish is getting on hand a large supply of coal. He will open up a coal yard in the east part of town." These local coal suppliers allowed the Nicodemus community to supplement foraging for fuel during the long winter months.[91]

Sometime in early 1888, the local railroad tycoon, J.P. Pomeroy, had begun purchasing a substantial number of lots in town, most likely speculating on a railroad's imminent arrival in Nicodemus. Pomeroy immediately began to plan the development of his new property. Town promoters were hopeful as well and, referring to Pomeroy's new acquisitions, claimed that "ere long, Nicodemus can boast of one of the finest business blocks in the northwest." By February, the local quarries were busy cutting stone. A month later, many of the local farmers were employed in hauling the stone block into town. However, by early spring, only three months after he had purchased his property in Nicodemus, plans for the new stone block were abandoned. Presumably Pomeroy knew or suspected that the railroad might not come to Nicodemus after all.[92]

By 1880, several of the satellite communities within Nicodemus Township and surrounding townships had grown large enough to support a school or church. The Mount Olive community four miles west of town, the Fairview community two miles north of town, and the

[88] Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit*, 24; Fraser, "Architectural Development," 47-50.

[89] Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 14, 24; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 7, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, December 16, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, April 6, 1888, 4.

[90] *Western Cyclone*, May 5, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, August 17, 1887, 1; *Western Cyclone*, August 12, 1887, 3.

[91] *Western Cyclone*, November 11, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, November 16, 1887, 4.

[92] *Nicodemus Cyclone*, March 16, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, February 24, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, March 23, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, March 30, 1888, 4.

Mulberry Grove community five miles north of town in Pioneer Township, each had a schoolhouse. The Mount Olive community also had a sod church, constructed in Mount Olive by Daniel Hickman's Baptist congregation in 1879. After its destruction by a cyclone in August 1887, a new stone church was built. A small cemetery, located adjacent to the new Mount Olive Church, is still used today.[93]

The construction boom during the mid- to late 1880s was not limited to the town of Nicodemus but also extended to individual farms and homesteads in the surrounding Township. In 1886, James Murphy erected a new residence on his farm, and James Campbell constructed "a substantial farm building on his old homestead." A year later Zach T. Fletcher had improved his home farm two miles west of town "quite extensively," and local banker A.L. McPherson fenced sixty acres of pasture southwest of town.[94]

Old and New Nicodemus

With increased town development and the construction of new buildings between 1886 and 1888, town promoters became increasingly concerned with the general appearance of Nicodemus. As Nicodemus grew into a substantial town in the summer of 1886, the editor of the *Western Cyclone* asked "why can't we have some of the old sod ruins leveled off and begin to think of planting trees and diverse other means to beautify our town? With the anticipation of a lumber yard and the location of several new business houses, we expect such a boom as the past is only a foreshadow of. All the new buildings are occupied and there is a demand for more to rent." A week later the same paper announced that in Mulberry Grove, "sod houses will soon be a thing of the past. Frame houses are looming up all over our beautiful land." In September of 1886, the editor of the *Western Cyclone* noted that "frame houses are springing up on every hand taking the place of the *most historical* sod house and dugout." [emphasis added] In June of 1887, Frank Levin removed an old sod and stone building from his lot on Main Street in order to construct a large store. However while dugouts and sod-ups may have been considered public eyesores, they were still regularly used in the late 1880s and considered an integral part of the townsite and Township fabric. The Nicodemus Land Company regularly sold farms that listed sod houses and sod stables. It is not known whether any unused dugout ruins were razed during the late 1880s.[95]

These comments suggest that a perceived dichotomy existed between the physical landscape of old and new Nicodemus. Many began to associate frame and stone Nicodemus with development, progress, and the future, whereas dugouts and sod houses were associated with stagnation and the past. To a large degree, town supporters' concern with the public appearance of Nicodemus was justified. Like residents of any other northwestern Kansas location, they wanted their town to be beautiful. In addition, Nicodemus's future was directly tied to attracting a railroad and town beautification was one way to attract potential residents and investors. Furthermore, as a predominantly black town, in the eyes of many white Kansans, Nicodemus's future was perceived to be the bellwether for the entire race of recently emancipated Americans.

Town Beautification and Public Improvements

Some beautification efforts in the town of Nicodemus focused on planting trees. In a largely treeless landscape, trees provided shade and also served as wind breaks. Groves of trees were often used as places for social and religious gatherings. The state government encouraged localities to plant trees and formally observed Arbor Day each year. In March 1887, the *Western Cyclone* noted that "Governor Martin has designated April 15 as Arbor Day. It is hoped the citizens of Kansas will observe this day and plant trees to the end that our homes and public grounds may be made beautiful and attractive. Let us observe this by every citizen planting a dozen or more trees about their premises." The week after Arbor Day, the newspaper observed that "many a nice tree was set out in Nicodemus to commemorate the day. A.N.

[93] Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 15; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, August 17, 1887, 1.

[94] *Western Cyclone*, October 7, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, May 12, 1887, 2; *Western Cyclone*, May 17, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, September 23, 1886, 3.

[95] *Western Cyclone*, July 1, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, July 8, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, September 23, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, June 10, 1887, 2.

Harper is taking the lead on tree planting, having set out more fruit and ornamental trees than any one person in town." Throughout the month, the plantings continued. "A.L. McPherson and others have beautified the appearance of our city by the liberal planting of trees." The following year, the editor of the *Nicodemus Cyclone* reported that "a meeting will be held Saturday afternoon to appoint a committee of tree planting. ...A few trees planted from time to time about the school grounds will make a beautiful park. Don't put the matter off. Arbor Day will be observed all over the state. Let us inaugurate the move and keep it up until our streets are lined with beautiful shade trees." After unsuccessful efforts by the tree planting committee, the Nicodemus students acted on their own and planted several trees.[96]

Residents were also urged to paint and fix up their homes and businesses. In the spring of 1887, the *Western Cyclone* pleaded, "paint, fix up, and make the town look as handsome as possible. There is nothing that makes a town look so inviting to the strangers as to see the houses painted and well kept." Individual businesses were praised for beautifying their premises. In May 1887, the banker A.L. McPherson was noted for the addition of an awning to the front of his building "which adds wonderfully to its appearance." A week later the paper commended J.B. Crowley for putting a new coat of paint on his store. On occasion, improvements to homes and businesses followed after damaging storms. "The recent storm has been productive of real improvement in our town as may be seen by the new porches, screens, windows, shutters, etc. that are being put up. It is foolish to neglect protecting windows and plate glass doors."[97]

Other town-wide improvements included a system of public wells in Nicodemus. In 1881, a public well was dug at the intersection of Main and Third Streets. The well was originally dug to sixty feet but the lining frequently collapsed due to the powerful water flow. In 1887, the *Western Cyclone* reported that "the old well in the center of Main Street is no more having been filled in this week." During the same year, the town of Nicodemus was described as possessing "a number of wells, with the very best of never failing water." Throughout the mid- to late 1880s, regional well drillers visited the area to service residential and business sites. In June 1887, a Mr. Richardson of Jewell visited the Nicodemus vicinity and attended to his "well auger business."[98]

Town Promotion and Boosterism

Much of the boosterism, municipal enthusiasm and economic development which occurred in Nicodemus between 1886 and 1887 was tied to the widespread anticipation of becoming a station on one of several railroad lines headed westward. Beginning in 1886, land speculation by individuals in Nicodemus was centered around the north part of town where it was thought the railroad line would come through. In general, land values also rose rapidly in the surrounding vicinity of Nicodemus Township. The Nicodemus Land Company, formed in 1886 to sell real estate, warned that "if you want to get land cheap, call on us soon, as land is rapidly increasing in value." A year later, the *Western Cyclone* noted that "real estate in this city is changing hands to a considerable extent and is appreciating in value every day. There is no unhealthy boom on, no wild craze for property, no fictitious values but a strong, firm and steady tendency which shows the healthy growth of the city."[99]

On occasion residents of the Township involved in land development would take out advertisements in non-Kansas newspapers in an attempt to appeal to black populations in other states. H.L. Vanerwall took out an advertisement in the Cleveland Gazette in December of 1884. The single-columned report praised the Colored governance of the Township and the pursuit of economic independence.

> NICODEMUS, KANSAS
> The Advantages of the West Should Attract Particularly the Southern Negro's Attention. Before emancipation, the question was often asked 'What will the Negro do? Are they capable of self-government?' In this place we

[96] *Western Cyclone*, March 31, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, April 21, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, April 28, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, March 30, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, April 16, 1888, 4.

[97] *Western Cyclone*, May 19, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, May 26, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, June 2, 1887, 2; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, June 8, 1888, 4.

[98] *Western Cyclone*, March 31, 1887, 2; *Western Cyclone*, June 24, 1887, 2; Kansas State Historical Society, "Rural/Agricultural Dominance," I-41. During the 1870s, most wells in western Kansas were dug by hand. However, during the mid- to late 1880s, well drilling machinery powered by horses or steam became common in western Kansas.

[99] Fraser, "Architectural Development," 50-51.

have practically answered the question in the affirmative. About six years ago we saw that the day for a black man to get property in the South was at an end and Ku-Klux rule commenced. When we spoke of coming West, we were told we were 'coming here to starve.' concluding that nothing would be lost by coming, a band of us came here from Lexington, Ky., and Columbus, Miss., and several from various other States and settled about two Governmental townships. We took our land under the homestead law and went to work like men, never shirking from the 'rough times' incident to frontier life. The amount of wheat, rye, corn, etc., of which we now raise, and the manner in which we are accumulating cattle is surprising to all newcomers. There are four district schools in one colony taught by colored teachers and more to be erected. Our township officers are all colored and we seldom fail to elect at least one county officer. Thus a new colored settlement of to-day has an advantage over the old settlements in Ohio and elsewhere, for wherein government was an oppression to them under the old color laws it is a benefit to us, as to a white man. When we read the pitiful complaints of our Southern brethren and go into eastern cities and see them carry hod and shovel, we consider them very short-sighted for not coming West and getting homesteads, as we have done. There is some vacant land here yet and Nicodemus is a Government town-site of which I shall speak hereafter. I would like to see some of the Ohioans coming here.

H. L. Vanderwall[100]

A second phase of formal promotion of Nicodemus began in 1886. During the year several black and white leading businessmen formed the Nicodemus Land Company in an effort to sell lots and land in Nicodemus and surrounding Graham and Rooks Counties. Most of the promotion occurred in the form of newspaper advertisements and was therefore solely dependent on circulation. Even so, during a single week in 1886, the Nicodemus Land Company claimed to have sold 400 acres of land. A year later, the Nicodemus Emigration Association was founded and by early 1888, the Nicodemus Immigration Union was also in operation.[101] Both of these organizations were formed to encourage the settlement of Nicodemus and its vicinity but were also tied directly to the promotional hype surrounding the potential arrival of a railroad line, and in particular the Missouri Pacific and subsequent Santa Fe and Union Pacific bids. Unlike the promotional efforts a decade earlier, these organizations targeted potential settlers of all races but expressed a desire to attract African Americans. Unlike the more active townsite promotion of 1877–1879, only several thousand circulars were printed and distributed "where they would do the most good."[102]

The promotional efforts during the mid- to late 1880s were successful to a degree. The Emigration Association claimed in early 1888 to have convinced fifty new families to move to Graham County and that the same number of farms was being located for them. Between 1886 and early 1888, the population of both the townsite and Township grew. In 1887, the town of Nicodemus had 200 residents.[103]

Founding of the Benevolent Society

In the spring of 1880, only a year after formally ceasing public aid solicitations, Nicodemus residents organized Chapter No. 7 of the First Grand Independent Benevolent Society of Kansas. During the summer of that year, the Nicodemus Benevolent Society sponsored the third Emancipation Celebration. The Benevolent Society was a traditionally African-American organization that Nicodemus colonists most likely brought with them from the Leavenworth, Kansas, Chapter and other parts of the South. Its primary purpose was to aid its members during hardship and provide social entertainment. The Emancipation Celebration was held in a grove of trees southwest of Nicodemus on the lands of S.B. Welton, who arrived in one of the early colonies. This group of trees was to become known as 'Welton's Grove,' or

100 *Cleveland Gazette*, 12/6/1884, 2.

101 It is presumed that both of these organizations were formed in the town of Nicodemus but it is not known if Nicodemus Emigration Association had offices or representatives elsewhere in the rural South.

102 Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 23; Fraser, "Architectural Development," 53; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, January 20, 1888, 4.

103 Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 23-24.

simply the 'Grand Arbor,' and would serve as the traditional meeting place for many of Nicodemus's annual social events.[104]

Improved Farming

In 1879, most farmers were able to purchase or borrow enough agricultural equipment and plowing teams to make farming profitable, and the farms surrounding Nicodemus began to become a cultivated landscape. One of these farmers, S.B. Welton, had broken fifty acres of land, half of which was planted in wheat. By 1881, Nicodemus Township had "thirty-one horses and ten mules, approximately one team for every four or five farms and reported an average of twelve acres per homestead in cultivation. These families had accumulated forty-three head of cattle and seventy-five hogs. They were growing 997 acres of corn, 93 acres of millet, 50 acres of sorghum, and 50 acres of rice corn." During the same year, Grant Harris had forty acres in cultivation and possessed sixty head of livestock. Anderson Boles planted seventy-five acres of grain and had one cow and calf and nineteen hogs. Thomas Johnson was cultivating forty acres and owned eight head of stock and John Lored was farming fifty acres of land and had sixteen head of livestock, three teams of horses, and nine hogs.[105]

Between 1880 and 1883, the farmers of northern Kansas experienced several consecutive years of poor harvests. Grasshoppers and drought conditions during these years made farming and therefore town development efforts difficult. As a reflection of the hard agricultural times, the population of Nicodemus Township in 1884 fell to 239, only one-fifth of whom lived in town.[106]

In 1884, Nicodemus farmers began to experience several consecutive years of excellent crop harvests, which lasted for several years. This improved agricultural production stimulated a positive outlook for the future of the town. In 1887, a special correspondent to the Atchison *Weekly Champion* described the farmers of Nicodemus Township with respect, noting that "...they own their own farms, many of them have accumulated some stock, planted trees, [and are] purchasing farm machinery." Agriculture was a prominent topic of discussion within the Township. The Nicodemus newspapers frequently reported produce and livestock reports on markets in Chicago, St. Paul, and Kansas City and published articles entitled 'Wheat and the World,' and 'Cows and what they give us.' Throughout the 1880s, many farmers planted the agricultural staples corn and, to a lesser degree, rye and wheat. A few farmers also experimented in oats and sorghum. Corn, rye, and hay were used to feed livestock but were also sold on local and national markets. In order to process their grains, area farmers had to take them to the nearest mills in Logan. Despite the announcement by the special correspondent to the Atchison *Weekly Champion* that "a gentleman named Charles will erect a flouring mill [?] mile south of town [Nicodemus] on the river," no evidence was found that it was ever constructed. Smaller home industries were initiated in Nicodemus. In December of 1886, the blacksmith William Scott purchased a two-horsepower grinder and was grinding corn into feed or meal, and Martin Lavell made sorghum molasses.[107]

Summer Harvest and the Festival Season

The two-month period between early July and early September included a series of local celebrations or festivals. In northwestern Kansas, July was usually the beginning of the harvest and threshing season for small grain crops such as wheat and rye. During good crop years, harvest and threshing were a time of celebration during which farmers and communities came together to help each other. Residents also frequently celebrated the Fourth of July and the anniversary of the founding of Nicodemus on September 17 at the 'Grand Arbor.' The festivities at these events were similar to those held during Emancipation Celebration. By mid-September, the celebrations were finished and a new planting season had begun. Farmers regularly began their fall plowing and sowing of small grains during this time.[108]

104 *Ibid.*, 16.

105 Schwendemann, "Nicodemus: Negro Haven on the Solomon," 18-19.

106 Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 15.

107 *Western Cyclone*, March 17, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, August 31, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 7, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 21, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, September 16, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, September 30, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, July 6, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, February 24, 1888, 4; *Western Cyclone*, March 17, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, December 9, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, September 16, 1886, 3.

108 *Western Cyclone*, July 15, 1886, 2; *Western Cyclone*, July 22, 1886, 2; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, July 6, 1888, 4; *Western Cyclone*, June 17, 1886, 2; *Western Cyclone*, September 23, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, June 24, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 7, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 14, 1887, 4; *Western Cyclone*, September 23, 1886, 2.

By the mid- to late 1880s, the annual Emancipation Celebration had become a substantial event, attracting residents of the Township and visitors from the larger region. The celebration was traditionally a three-day event that would begin on August 1. The Nicodemus band and town societies would meet in town in front of Benevolent Hall near the 'public square' and form a procession that would march around the major sections and then down to Welton's Grove. The route of the parade proceeded east on Washington to Second, south on Second to Jefferson, west on Jefferson to Fifth, north on Fifth to Main, and from Main to "the beautiful grove on Lewis Welton's farm." At Welton's Grove, festivities would include food booths, fireworks, footraces, a greased pole competition, balloon ascensions, band music, dancing and speeches. On the following day, residents would return to town to attend church services.[109]

Benevolent Hall, or the 'Hall,' was presumably the meeting place for the First Grand Independent Benevolent Society and may have been located in the former William Green building. In several newspaper references, Benevolent Hall is noted to be adjacent to the public square and the intersection of Third Street and Washington Avenue. William Green left Nicodemus soon after he constructed his store on the northeast corner of Washington Avenue and Third Street. The First Grand Independent Benevolent Society may have occupied the building by the mid-1880s or earlier.[110]

The first Nicodemus baseball team was formed in early 1887 when the Western Cyclone reported that "the boys have organized a baseball club at this place and start out with the assurance of success." In northwestern Kansas, most baseball teams were named after local newspapers and the Nicodemus team was no different. During their first team meeting in February 1887, it was resolved that "the said club is to be known as the *Western Cyclone Base Ball Club*. ...The uniform of said club is to consist of a black cap, white shirt containing the word 'Cyclone' across the breast, blue pants, red belt, and black stockings." The first formal match played in Nicodemus was against the 'Prairie Muffers' of Sugar Loaf, Rooks County on April 2, 1887. A match was also played against the Reveille Club from Hill City at the 1887 Emancipation Celebration, a tradition that was carried on into the late twentieth century. It is during this year that an informal baseball field was likely created at Welton's Grove. Oral histories record that the baseball field was located "across the road, north of where the Grove was."[111]

Animal Husbandry

Local and regional markets supported a thriving livestock industry. Many farmers supplemented agriculture with the sale of ponies, or poultry, pork, beef and dairy products. In 1886, Homer Boylan brought his herd of ponies into town to sell, and likewise Mrs. Charles Baxter raised 450 young chickens for market. A year later J.C.B. Lewis was able to dispose of his entire lot of ponies. Grocers and merchants in town frequently purchased locally raised fowl for the holidays and butchers bought local pigs and cows. In December 1887, T.W. Sample, a Nicodemus merchant, advertised that he wanted to buy "all the chickens, ducks, turkeys, and eggs you have got." Milk, cream, eggs and butter were also frequently sold locally. Thomas Johnson, a local farmer, was praised by the local newspaper for his success and achievements. In 1886, he and his family owned 1,000 acres of which 250 were under cultivation. He had "about sixty fine hogs and ...a larger herd of cattle and several fine horses."[112]

Gardens

Many homesteads and town lots had gardens adjacent to their residences. During the growing season, garden produce provided a substantial portion of the diet of Nicodemus residents. Excess produce was canned for

[109] *Western Cyclone*, July 7, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, August 5, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, July 22, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, July 13, 1888, 1; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, August 10, 1888, 4.

[110] *Western Cyclone*, June 17, 1886, 2; *Western Cyclone*, August 5, 1886, 3. It is believed that 'Benevolent Hall' was eventually occupied by the Nicodemus chapter of the Masons and subsequently became known as the 'Masonic Lodge,' 'Masonic Temple,' or 'Masonic Hall.' Hereinafter referred to as the Masonic Hall, the building housed the Masons and Eastern Star organizations upstairs and served as a social and community center up until Township Hall was completed in 1939.

[111] *Western Cyclone*, January 27, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, February 10, 1887, 2; *Western Cyclone*, March 24, 1887, 2; *Western Cyclone*, July 22, 1887, 3; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Alvin and Ada Bates, 7.

[112] *Western Cyclone*, June 3, 1886, 2; *Western Cyclone*, July 22, 1886, 3; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, August 24, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, December 23, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, July 1, 1886, 3.

future consumption or sold locally or in regional markets. Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, beans, peas and tomatoes were common products. In September 1887, the editor of the *Western Cyclone* noted that "quite a lot of garden stuff comes into town [from farms]."[113]

The gardens and trees in Nicodemus Township frequently suffered from a wandering goat population. In early 1888, the problem came to a head and the *Nicodemus Cyclone*, perhaps tongue-in-cheek, offered a remedy. "We would suggest to the city officials the propriety of leading farmers' goats and kids over the hill and sacrificing them for the good of our prospective trees and gardens. The goats must go!" Two weeks later the goat population appeared to have been reduced.[114]

Natural Resources

Some of the prominent natural features important to Nicodemus Township residents and used between 1877 and 1888 were numerous stone quarries, the Solomon River, and Spring Branch, a southeast flowing creek which drained into the Solomon River west and southwest of Nicodemus. As Fraser has noted, stone was the natural building material that many small western Kansas towns utilized before lumber was readily available. The relatively soft 'magnesia' of Graham County was easily quarried from local bluffs and cut and dressed into blocks. It was then hauled by sled or wagon to town. Many of the quarries were located within a few miles of town. In 1888, a substantial stone quarry was opened 'east of town.' The quarries not only provided a convenient, natural and abundant building material, but also created periodic labor for many Nicodemus men including sawing, preparing, and dressing the blocks, and transporting them into town. Many Township residents utilized the area's abundant water resources. Many farmers west of town resided on or farmed land adjacent to Spring Creek and this area was recognized as a prominent community in the Nicodemus newspapers. The Solomon River and Spring Creek both served as places of baptism for the regional community. In the winter time, ice was harvested from the Solomon and sold in town. In January of 1888, James Groze, a butcher, "put up enough ice to furnish the eastern end of Graham County. The ice on the river is in fine condition." Many families stored ice below ground in cellars or dugout ruins around town.[115]

Immediately prior to the settlement of Nicodemus and during its first ten years of occupation, the banks of the Solomon were noted to contain few trees. By the late 1880s however, cottonwood trees began to populate Spring Creek and the Solomon River. "The young cottonwood trees are springing up thick and fast along the Solomon River and its tributaries. This is caused from fires being kept out and excessive rains this spring. A few years hence, these streams will be well timbered."[116]

In addition to domesticates, animals native to the prairie were hunted for both meat and hides, and to reduce populations of certain predatory or "pest" species. In June of 1886, the *Western Cyclone* noted that several residents were capturing wolves whose scalps were worth $1.00 to $1.50 a piece.[117]

Streets and Roads

By the end of the 1880s, the town of Nicodemus reflected a blend of the old and new. Most of the new commercial development was concentrated in the north central part of town, while the southern half was dominated mostly by dugouts, sod-ups and a few aboveground buildings. In addition, town roads were only partly developed and most were not even completed. Only First, Third, Fourth and Seventh Streets extended south to Adams Avenue and beyond this they were most likely only footpaths. Jackson and Madison Avenues may have existed only in abbreviated forms.[118]

The condition of highways and streets was a common complaint in the rural Midwest. Nearly all of the roads in 1880s northwestern Kansas were unimproved, essentially dirt, thoroughfares. During dry weather the roads were rutted, compact dirt, but after snow and rain they were impassable mud channels. Bad roads were considered a

[113] *Western Cyclone*, July 22, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, September 9, 1887, 3.

[114] *Nicodemus Cyclone*, March 30, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, April 13, 1888, 4.

[115] Fraser, "Architectural Development,"42, 45; *Western Cyclone*, June 24, 1887, 2; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, February 24, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 28, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, September 30, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, January 5, 1888, 4.

[116] *Nicodemus Cyclone*, June 29, 1888, 4.

[117] *Western Cyclone*, June 10, 1886, 3.

[118] Nicodemus, Kansas: Townsite Plan – 1877–1890, in *Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Government Printing Office, 1986), vii; Fraser, "Architectural Development," 48.

nuisance and hindered commercial business, and like other visual eyesores, they were also viewed as impediments to progress. "When it rains they are impassable and speak a bad word of the town." Like other small towns, the residents of Nicodemus Township also complained about the condition of their roads. In March 1888, the *Nicodemus Cyclone* complained that "the last rain made the streets almost impassable and with the indication of more rain soon it will be terrible." A week later they again announced that "the public highways are in an intolerable condition and should be worked." A road supervisor, usually a resident of Nicodemus Township, was appointed to oversee the condition and management of the region's roads. He was authorized to request help from Township residents and they in turn lent their teams and labor. It appears that in Nicodemus Township roads were graded approximately once a year, usually in the springtime. In April 1887, A.G. Thomas, the road overseer, was "busy improving the public highways of the Township. Allen is putting every body to work and the result will be good roads and that is what we want to see." A year later, the *Nicodemus Cyclone* urged Township residents to consider the matter again. "Would it not do well during these warm days to perfect an organization and have our streets graded. ...Let the citizens get together and talk this matter over." A week later they again reminded residents of the urgency. "Will the citizens of Nicodemus neglect to grade the streets during this fine warm weather? ...Half a dozen teams two days would put it in very good condition." By April the road overseer was appointed and work begun. The *Nicodemus Cyclone* reminded its readers to be ready, "the road supervisor will sound his trumpet and you will have to respond. ...We hope the main street of our town will be given due attention."[119]

By 1888, the Township and County road system appeared to follow the roads already established between Nicodemus and its satellite communities and other regional towns. In 1887, Graham County declared that all section lines be established as roads with a sixty foot right-of-way.[120] Within Nicodemus Township, major regional roads intersected the town of Nicodemus along its northern and western boundaries. According to a 1906 map, following Nicodemus's western boundary, a road led south to the Solomon River and then west to Hill City. From the northwestern corner of the town of Nicodemus, a road led directly west to Hill City, paralleling the southern route. From Nicodemus's northern boundary, a road led three miles north to the 'Old Stockton Trail' and then east to Stockton. After the establishment of Bogue in late 1888, a road crossed the Solomon River between Sections 8 and 9, Township 8S, Range 21W, and entered the new railroad town. Ten miles south of Nicodemus was another road that led to Ellis. This road was later called the 'Red Line,' or South 40. A series of minor roads, generally following Section lines, also connected the smaller satellite communities together. Between Sections 35 and 36 in Township 7S and Range 21W, a north–south road connected several satellite communities to Nicodemus, including Fairview and Mount Olive.[121]

Natural Disasters

Natural disasters frequently took their toll on Nicodemus Township and not only destroyed personal property but also impacted the way the landscape was utilized. Nicodemus Township was located on an expansive prairie and because of this was exposed to severe rain and windstorms that often damaged both personal property and agricultural production. In the spring of 1888 the *Nicodemus Cyclone* reported that "the rain of Friday night was the heaviest in the history of the vicinity. Considerable damage was done to fences and some livestock perished. Corn that was listed was in some instances covered pretty deep." On other occasions, lightning ignited fires. In June 1886, "C.H. Newth's stable was struck by lightning and burned to the ground in a few minutes." The greatest storm damage occurred in the summer of 1887 when the town was directly hit by a 'hurricane.'

> Destruction in the Wind: Our little town was shaken from center to circumference on last Thursday evening. About 8 o'clock quite an

[119] *Nicodemus Cyclone*, March 30, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, April 6, 1888, 4; *Western Cyclone*, April 28, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, March 23, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, April 6, 1888, 4.

[120] This law was repealed only two years later. The repeal may have had more to do with the relatively large right-of-way, rather than the requirement that all Section lines become roads.

[121] "Township 8 South, Range 21 West of the 6th Principal Meridian, Kansas," *Standard Atlas of Graham County, Kansas: Including a Plat Book of* the *Villages, Cities and Townships* (Chicago: George A. Ogle Company, 1906); "Township 7 South, Range 21 West of the 6th Principal Meridian, Kansas," *Standard Atlas of Graham County, Kansas: Including a Plat Book of the Villages, Cities and Townships* (Chicago: George A. Ogle Company, 1906).

> angry cloud rose in the northwest and in a short time the elements were covered with its black coal. A general hurricane prevailed, the wind blew with terrific force, scattering timbers, boards and outhouses helter skelter at the same time the severest and largest hail that ever fell in these parts rattled down, the rains afterwards came down in torrents. Some few houses were moved and more or less damage done. All windows facing north were broken, causing quite a loss to many of our businessmen. Mr. Homer Boylan and wife taking refuge in the Free Methodist Church had a narrow escape for their lives as that building fell in while they were in it although miraculous they managed to get out. ...Corn crops ruined. ...The principal loss in our town were: St. Francis Hotel unroofed, Taylor's barn unroofed and generally wrecked, Boylan's drug store thrown from its foundations, Free Methodist Church blown down, Fletcher's barn damaged, barbershop blown to shreds.

The most frequent and destructive of all natural disasters were prairie fires. Prairie fires were started by both humans and natural elements and were whipped up by frequent winds. If not contained immediately, a prairie fire could quickly spread out of control causing innumerable losses regionwide. Prairie fires occurred most often in the early spring when many farmers practiced controlled burning. In late March 1886, it was reported that "prairie fires are raging on all sides and doing considerable damage by the burning of feed, etc." In April 1887, a prairie fire came close to destroying the town of Nicodemus and caused thousands of dollars worth of damage in the Township.

> Last Sunday during the heavy gale that prevailed, a fire broke out about 8 miles northwest of town, and the wind blowing it in a southeast direction brought the fire directly for this city sweeping almost everything in its path. The fire was discovered in time to make a protection on the north and west side of town. ...After about 2 hours of fighting the town was saved. The loss of property is great and we doubt if a more disastrous prairie fire ever swept over any portion of Graham County. Below we give a list of the losses so far as reported to this office. ...The fire originated from an old stack that had been set on fire Saturday on the Palmer farm northwest of town. It was supposed to have been extinguished but the high wind Sunday revived it blowing in the grass hereby causing all this vast destruction.

All property owners were vulnerable to a prairie fire because the means to fight fires were limited. Water was only available through wells and springs and was not practical in fighting a widespread prairie fire. A common practice to guard against prairie fires was to burn, dig, or plow fire breaks. Burning fire breaks was considerably easier because it required less labor, but it also posed a greater risk as these fires could spread out of control. The preferred method was to turn over the prairie grass with a plow in a sufficiently wide trench. This grassless barrier protected property by removing fuel in the path of the fire. In February 1888, the Nicodemus Cyclone reported that "several big fires have occurred during the past week in adjacent counties. Our farmers should plow fire guards at once. Don't put it off another day. Half days [sic] work will insure safety." Only a month later, after another large prairie fire in Sheridan County, they again argued "would it not be wise if our farmers to burn or plow fire guards at once and probably save the destruction of all their effects?" In April of the same year, they pleaded, "we insist on the citizens of Nicodemus to burn a fire guard around our town for protection. This demands immediate attention."[122]

Arrival of the Railroad

Active negotiation between representatives from Nicodemus and railroad companies began in late 1886. During this period, the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company contacted representatives from Nicodemus to inform them that the railroad would be taking one of two routes west, either through Stockton and then on to Denver via Nicodemus, or a northerly route to pass through Lenora, Kansas. Nicodemus officials were informed that the Missouri Pacific would need a minimum of $18,000 to ensure a rail line to their town. Other Graham County townships were also petitioned to

[122] *Nicodemus Cyclone*, June 1, 1888, 4; *Western Cyclone*, June 24, 1886, 3; *Western Cyclone*, August 12, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, March 24, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, April 7, 1887, 2; *Western Cyclone*, April 14, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, February 24, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, March 23, 1888, 4; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, April 6, 1888, 4.

commit money to the railroad in the amount of $132,000. In March 1887, Nicodemus Township voters approved railroad bonds in the amount of $16,000 and agreed to sell the railroad the right of way to build their road. Two months later, engineers from the Missouri Pacific Railroad surveyed the town of Nicodemus to find the best route for their road and location of a site for a station. By September 1887, the Missouri Pacific had decided to take another route west.[123]

Two other railroads also showed interest in a westward route through Nicodemus via Stockton. As early as February 1887, the Santa Fe Railroad was rumored to be looking at a route following the Solomon River west, and in March 1887, the Central Branch of the Union Pacific proposed a similar route. Joining with the towns of Webster and Millbrook, Nicodemus representatives petitioned the Santa Fe Railroad to make their town a stop. Despite surveying Nicodemus, the Santa Fe Railroad also bypassed the Solomon River towns. Over a sixteen month period between 1887 and 1888, Union Pacific officials visited Nicodemus several times and formally requested money from Nicodemus Township, and railroad engineers surveyed the area around the townsite twice. Union Pacific officials, however, chose to lay their track south of the Solomon River, creating a new town, Bogue, out of a railroad construction camp by June 1888.[124]

The following pages illustrate the landscape features associated with Nicodemus Townsite during the period 1879-1888

[123] Hamilton, "Settlement of Nicodemus," 18-21.

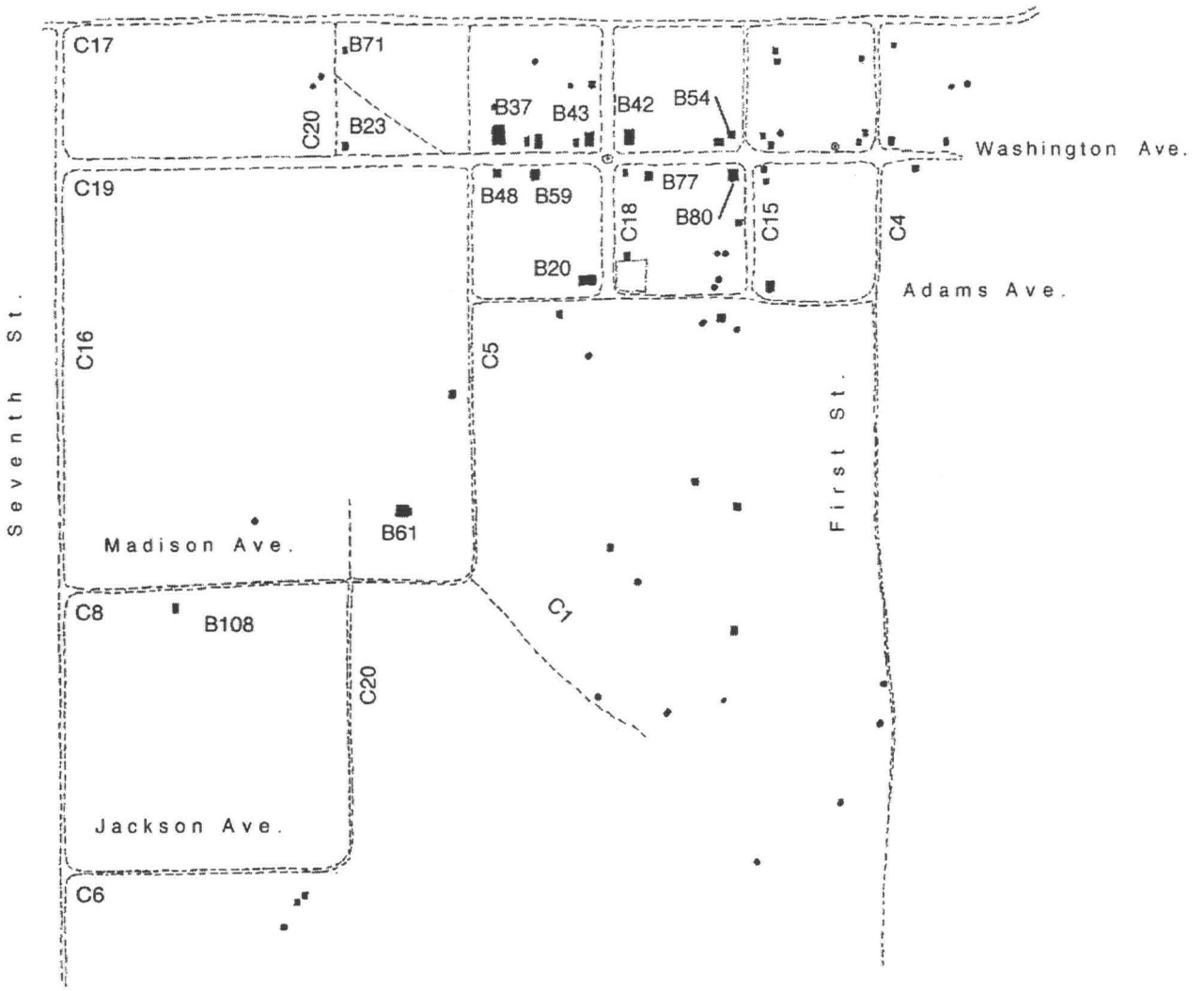
[124] *Ibid.*, 21. No documentary evidence has been found to suggest why the railroad did not come through Nicodemus. Many former and current residents and descendents believe that the railroads avoided the town for racist reasons. The fact remains that Nicodemus met all of the criteria required by railroad companies to receive a depot. During the period of western expansion through Graham County, Kansas in the mid-1880s, Nicodemus was the largest and one of the more developed towns in Graham County, clearly a prominent candidate to receive a depot. Nicodemus, along with other small towns in Graham County, raised the required amount of money asked for by the railroad companies and had agreed to sell them the right of way through town, just as a majority of other Midwestern and Western towns were required to do. Perhaps some light may be shed on this issue by conducting research in a number of railroad repositories.

The Boom Years: the Commercial Nicodemus, 1879–1888

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1879–1888	AME church, stone		B20	1885
Building/Structure	1879–1888	bank	McPherson	B21	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	barbershop	Wilson	B22	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	barn	Henry	B23	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	barn	Newth	B24	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	blacksmith shop	Scott	B25	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	blacksmith shop	Woofter	B27	1879
Building/Structure	1879–1888	blacksmith shop	Young	B26	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	building and barn	Sample	B28	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	butcher shop	Craig	B29	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	carpentry shop	Glazier	B30	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Douglass House Hotel	Boles	B31	1878
Building/Structure	1879–1888	drugstore	Craig and Turner	B33	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	drugstore	Newth	B32	1884
Building/Structure	1879–1888	dugout/sod-up	unknown	B34	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	farm building	Campbell	B35	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	farm implement store	Borin	B36	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	First Baptist Church		B37	1880
Building/Structure	1879–1888	frame building	Hawkins	B38	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	frame house	Newth	B39	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Free Methodist church		B40	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	furniture store	Duncalf	B41	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	general store	Green	B42	1880
Building/Structure	1879–1888	general store	Wilson	B43	1879
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Gibson House hotel	Smith	B44	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	grocery store	Weaver	B45	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	hardware store	Parrish	B46	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	hotel	Smith/Cayton	B47	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	joint stock store	Williamson	B48	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	livery	Taylor and Borin	B49	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	livery stable	Niles	B51	1880
Building/Structure	1879–1888	livery stable	Reese	B52	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	livery stable	Smith	B50	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	livery stable and corral	Fletcher	B53	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Masonic Hall, stone		B54	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	meat market	Greebles	B55	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	meat market	Groze/Loreo	B56	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	meat market/bakery	Duvall	B57	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	merchandise store	Fletcher	B58	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	merchandise store	Henry (Henries)	B59	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	millinery shop	Warner/ Fletcher/ Cotton	B60	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Nico. Dist. No. 1 School		B61	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	office, attorney	Jones	B63	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	office, attorney	Lawery	B62	1887

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1879–1888	office, attorney	Lowery/ Lightfoot	B64	1888
Building/Structure	1879–1888	office/barber shop	Garland/ Williamson	B65	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Burkholder	B71	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Carpenter	B68	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Cotton	B67	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Craig	B72	1879
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Harper	B70	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Murphy	B66	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Riley	B69	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	restaurant "Blue Front"	Hawkins	B73	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Rinehart and Co. drug store		B74	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	shop, shoe repair	Moreland	B75	1884
Building/Structure	1879–1888	sod church		B76	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	St. Francis Hotel	Fletcher	B77	1880
Building/Structure	1879–1888	stock store	White	B78	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	stone house	Wilson	B79	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	store	Crowley	B80	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	store	Levin (Lewin?)	B81	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	store	Williams	B82	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Lacey	B108	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	grocery store	Williams	B208	by 1885
Circulation	1879–1888	trails		C1	
Circulation	1879–1888	Adams Avenue		C3	
Circulation	1879–1888	First Street		C4	
Circulation	1879–1888	Fourth Street		C5	
Circulation	1879–1888	Jackson Avenue		C6	
Circulation	1879–1888	Jefferson Avenue		C7	
Circulation	1879–1888	Madison Avenue		C8	
Circulation	1879–1888	minor roads		C9	
Circulation	1879–1888	Public Square		C10	
Circulation	1879–1888	Road		C14	
Circulation	1879–1888	Road N boundary		C11	
Circulation	1879–1888	Road NW corner of town		C12	
Circulation	1879–1888	Road W boundary		C13	
Circulation	1879–1888	Second Street		C15	
Circulation	1879–1888	Seventh Street		C16	
Circulation	1879–1888	South Street		C17	
Circulation	1879–1888	Third Street		C18	
Circulation	1879–1888	Washington Avenue		C19	
Circulation	1879–1888	Fifth Street		C20	
Cluster arrangement	1879–1888	Spring Creek community		CA3	
Constr. water feature	1879–1888	public well		W1	
Constr. water feature	1879–1889	well		W2	
Cultural traditions	1879–1888	Emancipation Celebration		CT1	
Cultural traditions	1879–1888	parade		CT2	
Land use	1879–1888	agriculture (animals-pasture)		L4	
Land use	1879–1888	agriculture (crops)		L5	
Land use	1879–1888	baseball field		L9	
Land use	1879–1888	cemetery		L6	

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Land use	1879–1888	coal yard		L10	
Land use	1879–1888	fire breaks		L11	
Land use	1879–1888	stone quarry		L12	
Natural systems	1879–1888	sandy banks of river		N1	pre-sett
Natural systems	1879–1888	Solomon River		N2	pre-sett
Natural systems	1879–1888	spring		N3	pre-sett
Natural systems	1879–1888	Spring Creek		N4	pre-sett
Small-scale feature	1879–1888	fence		SS1	
Topography	1879–1888	low bluffs		T1	pre-sett
Vegetation	1879–1888	fruit trees		V4	
Vegetation	1879–1888	garden plots		V5	
Vegetation	1879–1888	Grand Arbor		V6	
Vegetation	1879–1888	scattered trees		V3	pre-sett
Vegetation	1879–1888	tree plantings in farms		V7	
Vegetation	1879–1888	tree plantings in town		V8	
Vegetation	1879–1888	trees along river		V9	pre-sett



Note: the numbered features represent a portion of the total list of landscape features that are catalogued on the following page.

Map Sources

Photograph: "An early view of Nicodemus, Kansas, ca. 1885", (Kansas State Historical Society) and "Nicodemus Kansas, Townsite Plan - Circa 1877–1890" by Historic American Building Survey, National Park Service, from Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas. (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1984); "Topographic, Boundary, Feature Survey-Cultural Landscape Report," from survey dated November 11, 1999 by Forgy Surveying.

Legend

- buildings/structures
- dugout/sod-up
- unpaved roads/lanes
- unpaved paths
- fence
- well

North

not to scale

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
CONCEPTUAL PERIOD PLAN
CIRCA 1879–1888

Figure 22.
Historic Period Plan, 1879–1888.



Figure 23.
Detail from 1895 map of Kansas showing communities such as Nicodemus, Hill City, Bogue, Damar, Ellis, Ellsworth, Kebar, Logan, Salina, Stockton, and Webster. Note that the county seats are indicated in bold type. This map also illustrates the network of rail lines across the region. (Source: http://fermi.jhuapl.edu/states/1895/ks_1895.jpg)

POST-RAILROAD ABANDONMENT OF NICODEMUS: A RETURN TO AGRICULTURE, 1888–1930

See figure 23. Detail, 1895 map of Kansas; also, figure 35. Historic Period Plan, Nicodemus townsite, ca. 1888–1930.

During the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s the boom period in Kansas ended across the state. Prices for crops and farm produce fell. Extended drought conditions into the mid-1890s meant that many crops failed. Farmers could not pay their mortgages, and banks foreclosed on many farms. A direct result of these conditions stimulated a population exodus whereby many residents moved out of western Kansas counties.[125]

In early 1888, as railroad workers continued to lay tracks south of the Solomon River, it was clear that the Union Pacific had decided to bypass the town of Nicodemus as a destination. At a point on the Solomon River where the Union Pacific's tracks turned due west, a small railroad camp was established. By September 1888, the small town of Bogue was platted in the location of the railroad camp by the Union Land Company, a subsidiary of the Union Pacific railroad. During late 1888 and early 1889, the reality of the commercial future of Nicodemus set in and a mass exodus from the town took place. Many businesses, both black and white, picked up and moved to Bogue and in the process took a number of frame and

[125] Kansas State Historical Society, "Rural/Agricultural Dominance," I-13.

even stone structures with them. By the end of 1888, Bogue consisted of 103 persons and thirty-seven buildings, many of which came from Nicodemus.[126]

As the rival commercial center of Bogue began to develop, the few businesses that remained in Nicodemus attempted to hold on and maintain their economic enterprises. A direct result of the exodus from town was a consequent decline in the population of Nicodemus Township. Between 1888 and 1890, the Township lost nearly 100 persons. By 1890, however, the Township population had stabilized and it remained close to 300 people until approximately 1905. Fraser has suggested that during this period, "the commercial climate in Nicodemus ...quickly reverted to its pre-1879 state, with blacks running basic-service businesses for an overwhelmingly black clientele." Throughout this transition period between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as town buildings were abandoned, many also began to slowly deteriorate.[127]

Physical Development of the Townsite and Township

Only a few commercial buildings remained in Nicodemus after 1889. Two congregations were still active in their structures, the First Baptist and the African Methodist Episcopal churches. In addition, the St. Francis Hotel, S.G. Wilson's store, and the William Green building, all stone structures, were among the buildings that remained in Nicodemus. Around the turn of the century, many African-American social institutions were founded, some of which took the space of old businesses. In 1893, the William Green building was converted into the Masonic 'Temple' or Hall. The Masons occupied the second floor and several families and later businesses used the first floor. Later, an addition to the rear of this building was added. By 1900, G.M. Sayers had purchased the S.G. Wilson building and operated a grocery store there that served the surrounding community until the mid-1940s. By the beginning of the second quarter of the twentieth century, the Sayers store also offered gasoline to automobiles.[128]

During the early twentieth century, town lots and home farms had a variety of water supply sources. The public system of wells that was dug during Nicodemus's heyday in the 1880s was still operational. Many of the working wells were used for a variety of purposes including human consumption and for watering livestock. Most residences, however, in both the townsite and Township had a well, cistern or access to a local spring. As G. Irwin Sayers remembered, "they had wells all over town. About every house had a well." Households, depending



Figure 24.
View looking west toward the First Baptist Church, 1908. Note the wooden bell tower over the door. (Source: University of Kansas [UK], Spencer Research Library [SRL], Nicodemus Historical Society Collection [NHSC].)

[126] Fraser, "Architectural Development," 51-52. The Graham County tradition of moving structures from one location to another may have began in 1888 after the abandonment of Nicodemus. The tradition continued throughout the twentieth century as many township and county residents chose to purchase and move an abandoned structure or move their own residence as opposed to building from scratch.

[127] *Ibid.*, 57.

[128] *Ibid.*, 58; Ms. Carol Alexander to Sherda Williams, January 19, 2001, Facsimile. Ms. Alexander indicated that the Masonic Hall was also a residence and recounts that her father, Earl Alexander, was born there.

upon their location, often utilized all three water sources as needed. It is also during the later part of this period that windmills became fairly common as smaller and cheaper models became available to Kansas farmers.[129]

By the turn of the century, the old First Baptist Church limestone structure had become too small for its congregation. In 1907, construction was begun on a new and larger structure (*See figure 24. 1908 Photograph of First Baptist Church*). Oral tradition is not clear on whether this new structure replaced or incorporated the old 1880 structure. A year later, the church was enlarged with the addition of an anteroom and corner steeple. After the weight of the slate shingled roof caused the exterior walls to buckle in the 1920s, Harry Bates constructed buttresses on the structure's east side. This First Baptist Church is now part of the Nicodemus NHS.[130]

The Fairview community schoolhouse was built in 1908. Five years later it burned and subsequently a new building was built in its place. The new school compound included a coal house and two outhouses, one for girls and one for boys.[131](*See figure 25. Fairview School class of 1915.*)

Abandoning their frame church north of the school house ca. 1910, the African Methodist Episcopal Church moved into the building constructed by S.G. Wilson and formerly occupied by the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church at the northwest corner of Third Street and Adams Avenue. The building was later renamed the African Methodist Episcopal Church and is now part of the Nicodemus NHS.[132]

In 1918, a new school building was constructed in Nicodemus for School District No. 1. The earlier building constructed in 1887 had burned down ca. 1916–1917. The year the new schoolhouse was constructed it held nineteen students and was described as 'modern,' having "a cistern at the corner of the porch from which pupils get their water." A bell, taken from one of the local Methodist churches, graced the schoolhouse. A small barn behind the school was present to shelter the students' horses. The 1918 School District No. 1 building is now part of the Nicodemus NHS.[133]

In 1918, the town of Nicodemus was described as having a population of sixty with two churches, a school, a money order post office, a restaurant, Masonic Hall, and



Figure 25.
The Fairview School class of 1915. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

[129] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas." Interview with Ada and Alvin Bates, 9; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with G. Irwin Sayers and Minerva W. R. M. Sayers, 8; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Juanita W. Redd, 18. By the mid- to late 1880s, most wells across Kansas were dug mechanically by steam or hose-powered drills.

[130] Fraser, "Architectural Development," 45-46. Fraser reports that 'local tradition' states that the 1907 structure was constructed around the earlier 1880 structure, and that when it was completed, the old one was removed piece by piece through the front door; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates, 15.

[131] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates, 11-12.

[132] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ada and Alvin Bates, 21; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with G. Irwin Sayers and Minerva W. R. M. Sayers, 24; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Anita G. Alexander, 8.

[133] Hackenberg, "A Negro Settlement in Kansas," 8; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ada and Alvin Bates, 14.

"a few scattered, dilapidated houses." According to the visitor, "none [of the houses] show[ed] much sign of paint, except the school house."[134] Between 1918 and 1919, a flu epidemic swept northwestern Kansas. Many residents in the Township lost their lives. Recalling the epidemic, Emma Griffie remembered "when the flu broke out, we had that. I had it with my dad. My mother was pregnant with Luella, and she nearly died from it. ...This flu killed so many people, but ...we had no deaths from it. A lot of people had it." During a visit to the Mount Olive cemetery in the 1940s, Van Shaw recalled inscriptions on the headstones. " We were shocked to discover the number of people who had died in the flu epidemic of 1918. It seemingly wiped out an awfully large number of people."[135]

Sod houses were still an integral part of Township life throughout this period. Several residents interviewed in 1983 remembered growing up in sod houses during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Juanita W. Redd was born in a sod house and lived there eleven years until 1920 when her family moved into a new frame house. Bernice A. Bates was also born in a two-room sod house, "one to cook in, the other to sleep in," and lived there nine years until 1911 when her father built a two-story frame house. After the new frame house was constructed, the old sod one was torn down. During the early twentieth century, three sod houses were still apparently standing in town, "two on the west part of town, and one in the southern part." Austin Smith, a local preacher, had a sod house in town "built out of sod, straw, dirt and mud and everything all mixed up." It was also noted that only four or five families did not own or rent a farm.[136]



Figure 26.
Marie and Bernice Alexander standing outside Henries gas station, located at the junction of Highways 18 and 24, date uncertain. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

Many frame and stone houses also had excavated basements or exterior cellars. These cellars, ranging in size from small closets to half the length of a house, served as storage units for perishable foods and other supplies. Fruit, vegetables, canned produce, and particularly dairy products were kept cool below ground with the aid of ice.[137]

By the second decade of the twentieth century, the populations in the satellite communities of Mount Olive and Fairview had begun to dwindle. Sometime in the 1920s, the Mount Olive Church ceased to be used and the

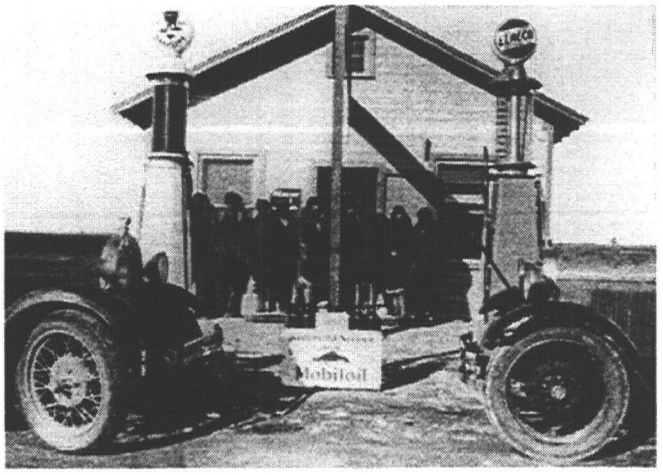


Figure 27.
1920s photograph of an unidentified gas station near Nicodemus. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

[134] Hackenberg, "A Negro Settlement in Kansas," 8-10.

[135] Interview with Emma Griffie, May 11, 2001, 396. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Dr. and Mrs. Van Shaw, May 12, 2001, 340, Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report. The flu epidemic in northwestern Kansas was a particularly virulent form called the Spanish Flu that impacted the entire nation between 1918 and 1919. It is thought that American servicemen returning from WWI brought the flu back with them. Approximately 675,000 civilians who contracted the flu between September 1918 and June 1919 died. See George Brown Tindall and David Emory Shi, *America: A Narrative History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 1156-1157.

[136] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Juanita Williams Redd, 2, 5; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates, 1; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Lloyd L. Wellington, 10.

[137] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Juanita W. Redd, 20.

population in the area fell to about a dozen residents as many people had begun to move out of the area to look for better jobs.[138]

The 1920s witnessed several developments within the townsite and Township. In the early 1920s, Reg Henries built a service station at the junction of US Highway 24 and State Route 18 between Bogue and Nicodemus. *(See figure 26. Henries gas station, 1943.)* In addition to providing gasoline for automobiles, Mr. Henries also rented tourist cabins. Several residents recalled that he used to show movies on the side of his store and that he also had a jukebox and platform that was used for dancing. A competing service station, grocery store and restaurant was opened by John Garland in the late 1920s. *(possibly, see figure 27. Unidentified gas station near Nicodemus, ca. 1920s.)* It operated through 1933 but ultimately could not compete with Henries' station and the 'Dirty Thirties.'

In 1924, a frame addition was built onto the west side of the Fletcher-Switzer residence. A porch was added on the north front six years later.[139] By 1925, the Priscilla Art Club was founded. This organization, which sponsored aid drives and promoted sewing and quilting, was located in a building on the north side of Washington Avenue between Second and Third Streets.[140]



Figure 28.
Mules hitched to header wagon. Date uncertain. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

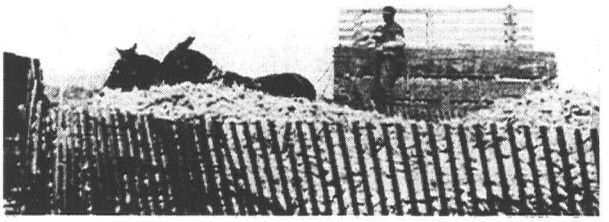


Figure 29.
1924 photograph of Tom Dotson at Harry Bates's farm. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

Agriculture and the Development of Farmer's Institutions

See figures 28. through 30., images of farming activities in Nicodemus.

A Graham County Atlas produced in 1906 *(See figure 31. Detail, composite maps of Townships 7 & 8S, Range 21W)* indicates that many Nicodemus Township residents who moved back to their farms, resided on their property. This created a dispersed farming community that

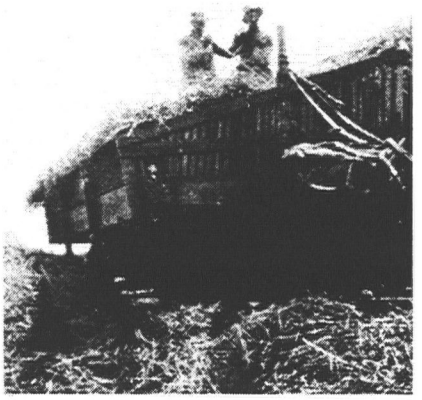


Figure 30.
Farmers haying with horse-drawn header wagon. Date uncertain. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

[138] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Anita G. Alexander, 4-5; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Lloyd L. Wellington, 12.

[139] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with L'Ray Scott, 1996, 213; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Billie B. Bates and Robert Brogden, 1996, 301; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Fred L. Switzer, 13; Interview with Dorotha Herndon, April 17, 2001, 99. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

[140] McDaniel, *A History of Nicodemus*, 84; Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 66.

reinforced the town's role as a social and cultural center. According to the 1906 Graham County Atlas, nearly all of the farms surrounding Nicodemus contained residences. Residences were generally located adjacent to a section line, which frequently meant a roadway since section lines were required to be county roads.[141]

The years subsequent to Nicodemus's commercial collapse were not kind to farmers in western Kansas. Between 1889 and 1890, and 1893 and 1894, drought conditions caused successive crop failures throughout the region. By 1895, seed had to be distributed by the state of Kansas to many western farmers who had lost their crops and therefore next season's seed due to drought. As a result, many farmers who could not meet their loan payments defaulted and had their farms foreclosed on by local banks. Many of these properties were eventually purchased from the bank by white settlers.[142]

During the early 1900s, crop yields for Nicodemus Township began to improve. As a result, local interest in improved farming methods increased. In 1910, a farmer's institute sponsored by the Kansas State Agricultural College was held in a church in Nicodemus. More than 150 local farmers attended. A year later, the first of two agricultural schools was created in Nicodemus Township. In 1911, W.O Sturgeon and his wife purchased 160 acres from W.L. Sayers (*See figure 32. W. L. Sayers.*) in the southeast quarter of Section 33, Township 7S, Range 21W, "for the use and benefit" of the trustees of the

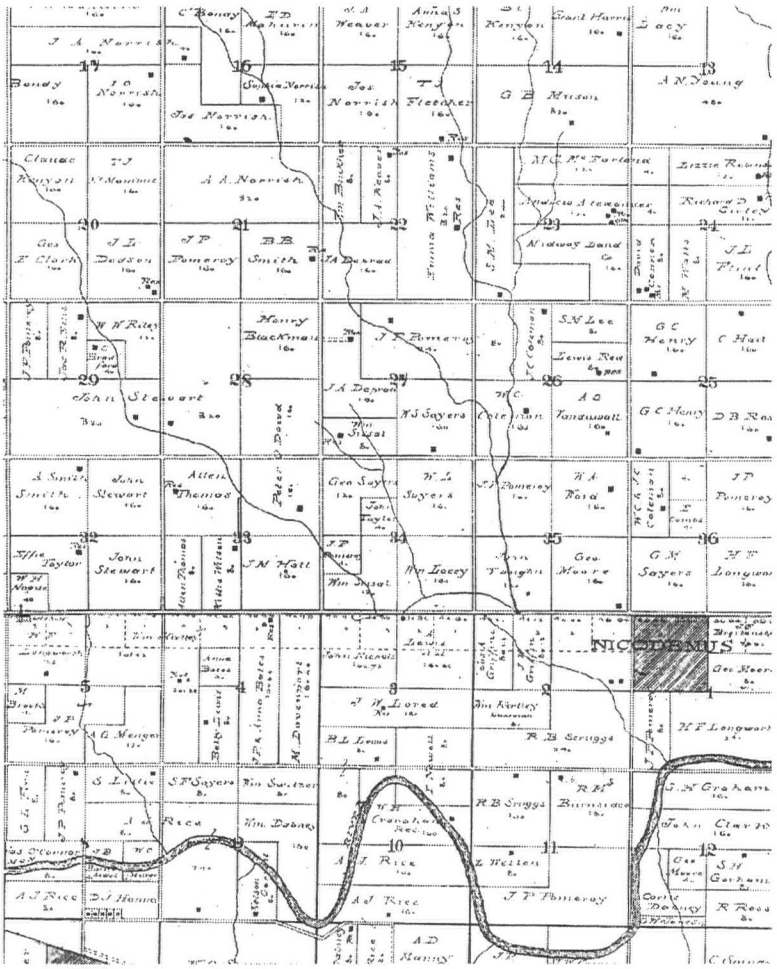


Figure 31.
A composite image of details from 1907 maps of Township 7 South, Range 21 West, and Township 8S, Range 21W, showing the Nicodemus townsite and the eastern half of the Township, including property ownership, the river, various streams and drainageways, and existing road right-of-ways. (Source: *Standard Atlas of Graham County, Kansas. Including a Plat Book of the Villages, Cities, and Townships*. Chicago: George A. Ogle Co., 1906.)

Figure 32.
W.L. Sayers, who held various elected offices in local government. (Source: Belleau.)



141 "Township 8 South, Range No. 21 West of the 6th Principal Meridian, Kansas," *Standard Atlas of Graham County, Kansas.*

142 Fraser, "Architectural Development," 57; Charles H. Emmons, ed., *Graham County, Kansas* (Hill City, Kansas: *The People's Reveille*, 1904), n.p.; It is important to stress that agriculture was never abandoned per se and always remained the economic backbone of the larger county and Nicodemus Township in particular. However by the end of 1888, it was clear that Nicodemus and its vicinity would never become a leading commercial and social center of Graham County as it so truly desired.

Western Kansas Industrial Training School. This was to be an agricultural school for farmers in northwestern Kansas. The Sturgeon property had at least two dwellings on it. "The farm had a big house and a little house for hired help." Towards the second quarter of the twentieth century, farmers could borrow farm machinery stored on the property. "Rev. Wilson was put in charge of the machinery which could be borrowed or rented by the local farmers."[143]

A second industrial training school, the 'School Farm,' was established north of the Bates farm. "A school was supposed to be built there, but I don't know whatever happened that they didn't get the school built, but it's still called the School Farm." The School Farm taught Nicodemus youths how to farm and let each student farm a piece of the property. "Ralph Scroggins administered the School Farm." Both the School Farm and the Sturgeon Farm were eventually sold to white owners in the second half of the twentieth century despite restrictions stipulating their use for the benefit of farmers only.[144]

In 1915, a farmer's union was organized in Nicodemus Township. The improved farming techniques and choice of crops adopted by local farmers appeared to make an immediate difference in crop production. "After 1916, the people just gradually went to breaking out more ground and they went wheat crazy. In 1916 they had a bumper crop." Promotional publications of the period document that Graham County began to stress the diversification of its agriculture and also emphasized the importance of eggs and butter production and that "the dairy business holds a glowing promise for the future." In addition, alternative irrigation technologies were adopted including the irrigation of vegetable gardens by windmill.[145]

During the mid- to late 1920s, crop yields in general, and corn in particular, for Graham County and northwestern Kansas were excellent. During oral interviews, many Nicodemus Township residents remembered the mid-1920s as some of the more prosperous years. Both corn and wheat were staple crops of the period, but the 1920s were recalled as the corn years. "During the corn years, they raised good corn, but it got to the place that it just got too dry. ...It was in the '20s we raised the big corn crop, I think it was. In the '30s they were still raising some corn."[146]

Like earlier periods, most crops were processed outside of Nicodemus. Many farmers from Nicodemus Township patronized the mills at Logan or later in Hill City and Osborn. Both wheat and corn were ground there and provided cornmeal and flour for regional farmers. In addition, Lon Alexander, a local resident, had a corn grinder and many Township residents brought their corn to his farm for grinding.[147]

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Animal husbandry continued to be practiced by most households to a greater or lesser degree. Livestock and fowl supplemented the family diet, provided income, or both. Most families had at least one or two milk cows to provide dairy products. Swine, beef cattle, geese, ducks, turkeys and chickens were also common and were kept in barns, pens, or houses adjacent to residences. A staple of the early twentieth century Nicodemus diet was pork. Pigs were relatively inexpensive to raise and provided an important nutritional source. Slaughtering pigs, or less frequently cattle, was a social occasion that drew relatives and neighbors together. Those families who possessed cattle generally did not fence them during this period.

143 "The Story of Nicodemus," *Negroes Clippings*, March 1910, Vol. 5-6, 202; Graham County Deed Book (GCDB) 35, 599; Interview with Ada Bates and Alvina Alexander, April 23, 2001, 244-45. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Dr. and Mrs. Van Shaw, May 12, 2001, 337-338. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

144 Interview with Ada Bates and Alvina Alexander, April 23, 2001, 245, Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

145 Robert Hackenberg, "A Negro Settlement in Kansas," January 1, 1918, 7 (Nicodemus Historical Society Collection, University of Kansas, Spencer Research Library, Lawrence Kansas); Historical Records Survey, Division of Women's and Professional Projects, *Inventory of the County Archives of Kansas*, 9; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates, 16; Emmons, ed., *Graham County, Kansas*, n.p.; Kansas State Historical Society, "Rural/Agricultural Dominance," I-41. As previously noted, during the early twentieth century smaller, cheaper, metal windmills generally became available to most farmers. Due to the recommendation of their use by farmer's institutions and their increasing availability and affordability, many Nicodemus Township farms acquired windmills during this period.

146 Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 69; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Juanita W. Redd, 7; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates, 16. Sweet corn was introduced by the Burpee Seed Co. in 1902 and became popular very quickly. It is likely that most Kansas farmers grew this variety during the first half of the twentieth century.

147 Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Juanita W. Redd, 2; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Rev. Chester A. Williams, 1996, 146; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Donald M. Moore and Bertha Moore, 1996, 186; Nicodemus Township Board to Steve Linderer, Superintendent, Nicodemus NHS, January 11, 2001.

Rather, Nicodemus farmers herded their cattle. "We didn't have too many fences. They usually always take the stock out and then we herded, we herd stock to keep them off of other peoples places. No there wasn't many fences back then, because everybody, you just go out and herd your stock." Several residents recalled running cattle along the Solomon River. The banks of the Solomon were considered public lands. Herders, quite frequently children or youths, followed the cattle all day long and brought them back to their pens at the end of the day. This practice continued until the late 1920s when most farmers abandoned herding and turned cattle out into enclosed pastures. Dried cow chips were frequently picked up in pastures and used as fuel for heating and cooking.[148]

GARDENS

Most families in town or on farms continued to cultivate gardens, some of them fairly extensive. Gardens were integral to a family's survival and provided Nicodemus residents with an abundance of fresh food. Produce typically grown during the early twentieth century included corn, cabbage, beets, turnips, carrots, watermelons, cantaloupe, okra, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, pumpkins, black-eyed peas, and 'all kinds of beans.' Garden plots were generally located adjacent to a residence for convenience. Frequently, families also had garden plots in their agricultural fields where more land could be devoted to crops planted in bulk such as watermelons and potatoes. Despite some Township residents' experiments with windmill irrigation, garden plots were generally not irrigated extensively.[149]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Township residents relied on a wide variety of native flora and fauna to supplement their diet and provide medicinal remedies. Local wild vegetables, including tomatoes, onions, lamb's quarters, poke, mustard, lettuce, dandelions, pigweed, tiny risson, thistle shoots, and narrow dock provided a substantial range of fresh, seasonal greens and vegetables. Some even gathered wild cactus and made preserves and pickles. Wild plums, grapes, mulberries, and chokecherries were harvested by the banks of the Solomon River and Spring Creek and dried or turned into pies and jellies. Home remedies and medicinal plants were generally used to reduce pain and fever and assuage sores and included asafoetida, quinine, poultices and snakeroot. "Of course they'd put that [asafoetida] around your neck, and that was supposed to keep all the disease and things away from you. That was your vaccine. You carried that around as a preventive. ...And stink! Oh, mercy! It had an awful odor! Had a combination smell like garlic, onion, and I don't know what all, but it was smelly, so it was supposed to keep the disease away, but it could keep anybody away." Animal biproducts including skunk oil and goose grease were also cited by a number of residents as common home remedies. After skunks were caught, the fat would be rendered and put in a container to keep. Skunk oil and goose grease would usually be rubbed on chests, "it'd help you loosen your chest up."[150] Sunflower stalks were also picked up and used as fuel for fires. In addition 'soapweed' a tall white flowering plant, was gathered to decorate cemetery graves on 'Decoration Day.' The flowers were traditionally picked the day before Decoration Day. After decorating graves in the cemeteries, families would gather in town for a picnic dinner.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the Solomon River and Spring Creek continued to be prominent natural resources for the region's residents. For many Township residents, fishing became a favorite recreational activity. Fish, turtles, and on occasion, fresh water mussels were obtained from the Solomon. Children and adults swam in its waters, and during seasonal months harvested ice allowed residents to preserve their perishables. Baptisms continued to be held

[148] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Juanita W. Redd, 11, 17; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Leeverett G. Switzer, 223; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Helen J. Dabney, 1996, 241.

[149] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with G. Irwin Sayers and Minerva W. R. M. Sayers, 12; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Florence M. M. Howard, 1996, 321; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Lester V. Napue, 1996, 356; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with L'Ray Scott, 1996, 221; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Charlesetta W. Bates, 287.

[150] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Juanita W. Redd, 16-17; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with G. Irwin Sayers and Minerva W. R. M. Sayers, 13; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ora W. Switzer, 10-11; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Florence M. M. Howard, 1996, 322; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Charlesetta W. Bates, 1996, 286; Interview with Emma Griffie, May 11, 2001, 396. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Ada Bates and Alvina Alexander, April 23, 2001, 241-242. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Pearlena Moore, April 20, 2001, 205. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

in both Spring Creek and the Solomon River. Along Spring Creek, a special place that held a grove of trees was chosen, "by the Buckner's place, ...near where Rosa Stokes lives now." Baptisms were frequently done in large groups and were important social events for the Township. Ada Bates remembered that her parents were baptized when there was still ice on Spring Creek.[151]

In 1915, a major flood overflowed the banks of the Solomon River. Several residents recalled during oral interviews that many of the cottonwood trees that were apparent in 1983 were a 'recent phenomenon' and believed their presence to be a direct result of this flood. "After that [the 1915 flood], trees started to growing in the river and in a lot of places where there wasn't any trees." Ora Switzer, a lifelong resident of Nicodemus, remembered when the Solomon "wasn't anything but willows. We'd get willow fishing poles and willow this. These [cottonwood] trees have just come in here in the late years and they've knock out the water and the roots just run around the river and cover it up. ...Just solid up the river."[152]

SCRUGGS'S GROVE AND THE GROWTH OF THE EMANCIPATION CELEBRATION

In late 1897, R.B. Scruggs purchased the mortgage on the original S.B. Welton property southwest of Nicodemus, receiving a deed from M.A.W. Dillman and her husband. Like its predecessor, the property that would later become known as 'Scruggs's Grove,' would serve as the location of many annual celebrations, including the Emancipation Celebration. Adjacent to the grove was the R.B. Scruggs residence: "He had a lovely rock house there." The limestone house was located "right at the end of the Grove on the...southwest corner....He had a good well there in [the] Grove." R.B. Scruggs is said to have brought cottonwood trees with him from Denver where he was working on the railroad. These trees were to form the core of the Grove. Oral accounts have located the baseball field 'across the road,' and north of Scruggs's Grove.[153] (*See figure 33. Photograph of a baseball game near Scruggs's Grove; figure 34. ca. 1940s view of Scruggs's Grove. See also figure 114. Sites of cultural importance, in Chapter Three.*)

During the first half of the twentieth century, the Emancipation Celebration was a regionally popular three-day affair for both blacks and whites, often attracting several thousand persons. Wagons and later cars would transport Graham County residents to the site under a grove of cottonwood trees by the Solomon River. Those who lived too distant to return home at night often camped in tents. Numerous food stands and entertainment activities for adults and children were available, including carnival and amusement rides, music and dancing, horse racing, and the much-anticipated

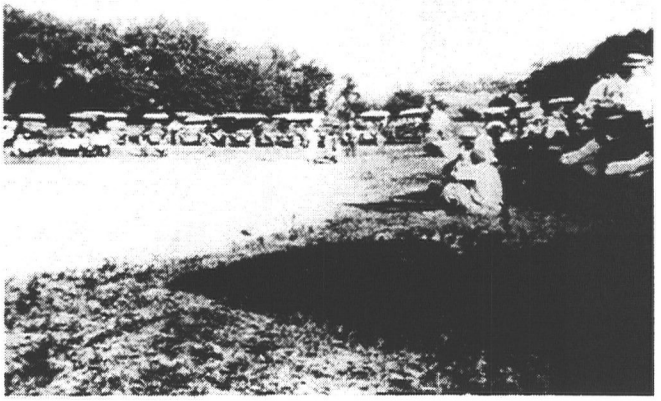


Figure 33.
A baseball game at Scruggs's Grove. Date uncertain. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

[151] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Fredonia R. DuPriest, 7; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Melvina Williams, Wanda Adams, Pearlena Moore, Roberta Robinson, and Ivalee Switzer, 1996, 258; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Charlesetta W. Bates, 1996, 287; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Alvena B. Alexander, Billie B. Brogden and Ada W. Bates, 1996, 307.

[152] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview #1 with Bernice A. Bates, 6; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ordral and Alvena Alexander, 4; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Fred L. Switzer, 1983, 14; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview #1 with Ora W. Switzer, 14.

[153] *Nicodemus News Review*, Summer Issue (1996), 7; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates, 18-19; ; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ada and Alvin Bates, 7, 17.



Figure 34.
Circa. 1940s photograph of Scruggs's Grove. Winter view of grove, looking east. (Source: Valeria Thomas, reprinted from *Nicodemus News Review*, Summer 1996.)

annual baseball game.[154] A newspaper correspondent who frequently covered the history of Nicodemus noted in 1920 that "at one time, the celebration was plenty to hold annually, but later two have been held the same day, in separate groves, said to be on account of jealousy."[155]

STREETS AND ROADS

Like any other western Kansas town of the period, the condition of the roads in Nicodemus in the first quarter of the twentieth century depended upon the weather. In wet periods, the roads had continual drainage problems that created muddy and potholed surfaces. During the early 1900s, the major roads in Nicodemus, including Washington Avenue, Third Street from South Street to Adams Avenue, Fourth Street from Washington to Madison Avenue, and Madison Avenue from Fourth to Seventh Street, were graded and ditches dug. Early on, this was accomplished by a horse-drawn team dragging a grader behind it. Township roads were similarly graded and ditched during this period.[156]

Less formal equestrian and pedestrian trails or paths crossed properties and fields and led into and out of town and to regional schools, churches, cemeteries, and other facilities which were frequently visited. These 'prairie roads' provided a quick and efficient means of traveling through Nicodemus Township. As one Township resident recalled, "the closest way to get to an object, that's the way they would go. There were roads all over the prairies where people had went this way, that way and the other. They didn't, they wasn't squared off in miles like they are [now]....They just cut across."[157]

The following pages illustrate the landscape features associated with Nicodemus Townsite during the period 1888-1930

[154] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 66, 69.

[155] Harry Root, "Colored Colony," *Topeka Journal, 6th District News and Notes*, July 3, 1920, 54-55. It is possible that this comment may refer to the annual celebration held in Bogue that attempted to compete with Nicodemus's for a while. According to Alvin T. Bates, the residents of Bogue "would have theirs. They tried to have it first, ahead of ours, but they never could succeed with it....in fact, trying to take the crowd. That's what they done it for, but they didn't succeed [so] they finally had to wait until we had ours."

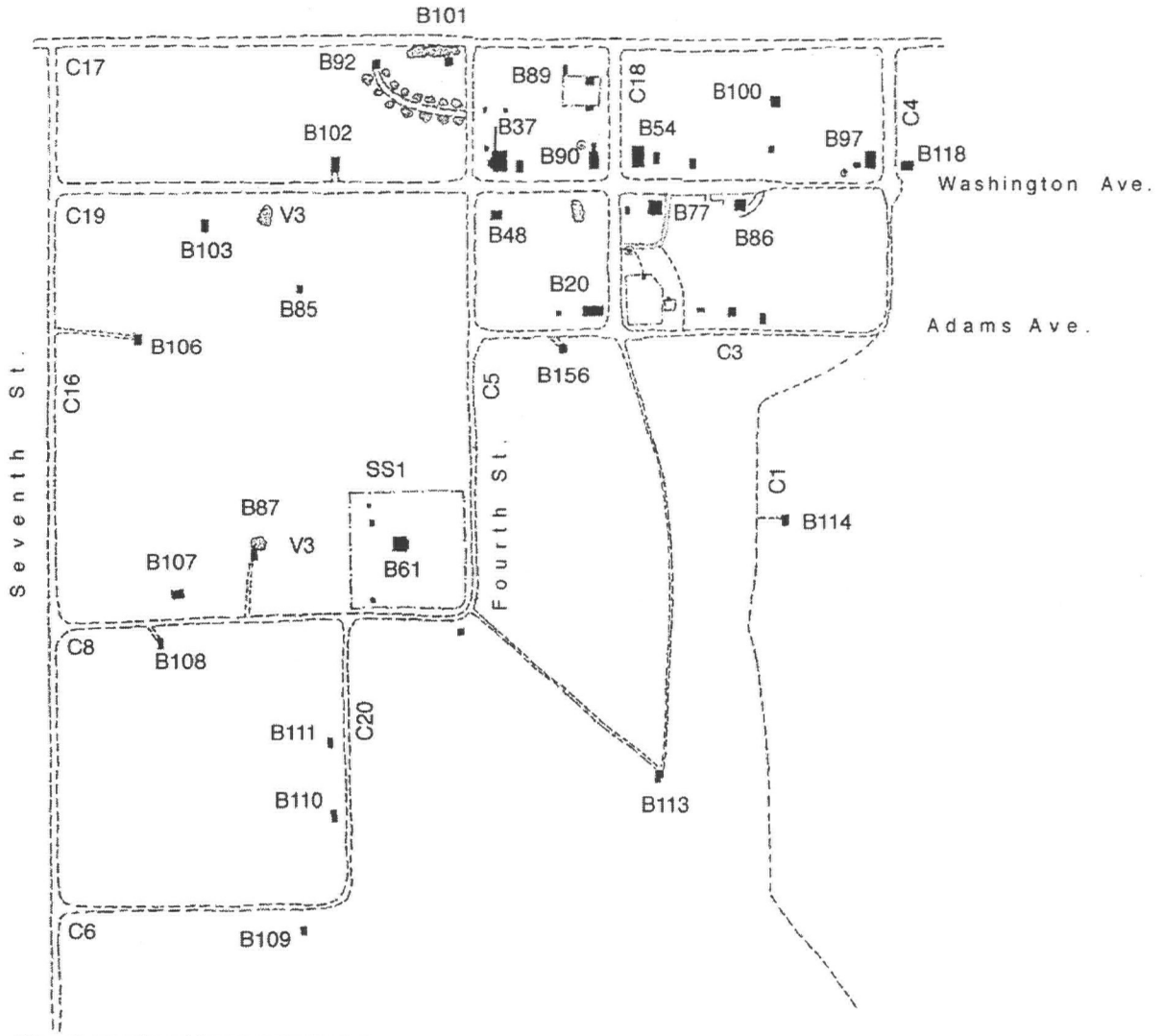
[156] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 66.

[157] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ada and Alvin Bates, 32.

Post-Railroad Abandonment of Nicodemus: A Return to Agriculture, 1888–1930

Feature Category	*Period*	*Feature*	*Owner*	*Feat. #*	*Origin*
Building/Structure	1888–1930	A.M.E. Church		B20	1885
Building/Structure	1888–1930	First Baptist Church		B37	1880
Building/Structure	1888–1930	store	Williamson	B48	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	Masonic Hall		B54	1886
Building/Structure	1888–1930	Nico. Distr. No.1 School		B61	1887
Building/Structure	1888–1930	St. Francis Hotel, residence	Switzer	B77	1880
Building/Structure	1888–1930	animal pens		B83	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	barn		B84	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	barn	Stewart/Goins	B85	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	cafe	Bates	B86	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	dugout	Mathew	B87	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	exterior cellars		B88	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	granary and pens	Sayers	B89	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	grocery store	Sayers	B90	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	house complex	Riley	B91	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	mercantile store		B92	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	mercantile store		B93	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	old AME Church ruin		B94	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	parsonage, First Baptist		B95	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	recreation hall	Riley	B97	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Scruggs	B98	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Wilson	B99	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Baxter	B100	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Williams	B101	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Scott	B102	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Stewart/Goins	B103	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Craig	B104	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Lacey	B105	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Napue	B106	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Sayers	B107	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Lacey	B108	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Reverend Smith	B109	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Smith	B110	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Buckner	B111	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Thomas	B112	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Vaughn	B113	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Robinson	B114	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence and cafe	Switzer	B115	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residences		B116	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	restaurant	White	B117	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	restaurant	Riley	B118	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	restaurant	Lee	B119	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Lacey	B156	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	service station and cabins		B120	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	grocery store	Williams	B208	
Circulation	1888–1930	trails		C1	
Circulation	1888–1930	Adams Avenue		C3	
Circulation	1888–1930	First Street		C4	
Circulation	1888–1930	Fourth Street		C5	

Feature Category	Period	Feature	Owner	Feat. #	Origin
Circulation	1888–1930	Jackson Avenue		C6	
Circulation	1888–1930	Madison Avenue		C8	
Circulation	1888–1930	Seventh Street		C16	
Circulation	1888–1930	South Street		C17	
Circulation	1888–1930	Third Street		C18	
Circulation	1888–1930	Washington Avenue		C19	
Circulation	1888–1930	Fifth Street		C20	
Constr. water feature	1888–1930	well		W2	
Constr. water feature	1888–1930	cistern		W3	
Constr. water feature	1888–1930	irrigation		W4	
Vegetation	1888–1930	tree cover at Mathew dugout site		V3	pre-sett



Note: the numbered features represent a portion of the total list of landscape features that are catalogued on the following page.

Map Sources

Photograph, "Looking west down Washington Street, 1922" (and "Nicodemus Kansas, Townsite Plan - Circa 1920" by Historic American Building Survey, National Park Service, from Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas. (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1984); "Topographic, Boundary, Feature Survey-Cultural Landscape Report," from survey dated November 11, 1999 by Forgy Surveying.

Legend

- tree cover
- buildings/structures
- ruin-building/structure
- unpaved roads/lanes
- unpaved paths
- fence
- well

North

not to scale

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
CONCEPTUAL PERIOD PLAN
CIRCA 1888–1930

Figure 35.
Historic Period Plan, 1888–1930.

DECLINE OF THE NICODEMUS COMMUNITY: THE DUST BOWL AND WORLD WAR II, 1930–1945

A state-wide drought occurred in Kansas between 1932 and 1938. As a result of the drought, annual dust storms, the Dirty Thirties, battered Kansas during this period; 38 storms occurred in 1933, 40 in 1935, 68 in 1936 and 72 in 1937. Before the end of the dust bowl, a total of 315 dust storms had hit the state, removing valuable topsoil from agricultural regions and forcing airborne black dust into cities and towns.[158]

During this period, the agricultural economy of Nicodemus Township and larger northwestern Kansas took a downturn. Because the dust storms destroyed crops and livestock across Kansas, many farmers could not meet their mortgage payments. As a result, numerous Nicodemus vicinity farms were transferred to banks and lending institutions. A significant number of Township residents were ultimately reduced to tenant farmer status during this period. Unable to provide for their families, many farmers just walked away from their property. Because of the exceptionally poor agricultural harvests and the resulting financial hardships, the government established the Federal Land Bank to aid farmers on the brink of bankruptcy in 1934. During the same year, the Graham County Farm Bureau was also established to help the recovery of both farmers and ranchers.[159]

From the mid-1930s through the early 1940s, federally funded projects in western Kansas targeted improving agricultural practices and assisted building and community service programs to ameliorate the extensive natural disaster and act as an economic stimulus to end the Great Depression. As a result, the programs of the Kansas Emergency Relief Committee, the Work Projects Administration (WPA), the Public Works Administration, and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had a significant role in rural and town improvements. Ultimately the natural disasters of the 1930s resulted in tangible changes to the rural landscape and social organization of Kansas. Soil conservation became a major priority in the mid-1930s. Terracing of farmland was recommended to retain moisture. Between 1937 and 1938, shelterbelts and windbreaks were planted by the WPA or CCC throughout Kansas to reduce wind strength and hold soils in place. The WPA also supported community services and cultural programs. Sewing rooms were set up in schools, public buildings and homes for women to repair and make new clothing for the needy.[160]

The Dust Storms

Like most Great Plains towns, the dust storms between 1932 and 1934 left Nicodemus and its features covered in black dirt. Residents recalled that the storms could be seen a long distance away and that the sky would darken quickly. When the dust storms hit, in some cases visibility was so poor that residents could not see their hands in front of their faces. When caught out in a storm, many residents recalled having to follow physical landmarks such as roads or fences or crawl on their hands and knees in order to find the way home. Despite residents' best efforts, the dust penetrated most houses and covered everything. Wet sheets hung in windows and doors attracted the dust but only worked to a point. Particularly bad storms would remove soil from agricultural fields and deposit it on roads and against houses and fence lines. Many residents recalled that fence lines held dust and debris that was often piled several feet deep, high enough that cattle and other livestock could walk right over the fence.[161]

Physical Development of Townsite and Township

See figures 34. through 61. Scenes of the community of Nicodemus.

During the second quarter of the twentieth century, the St. Francis Hotel was improved by the Switzer family. As Ora Switzer recalled, "when we got it, we had so many kids, we added on rooms, and bought houses and added

158 Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, "Study Unit on A Time of Contrasts: Progress, Prosperity, and the Great Depression, 1900-1940," in *Kansas Preservation Plan* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1990) 39-43.

159 Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century,'" 70-71.

160 Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, "Study Unit on A Time of Contrasts: Progress, Prosperity, and the Great Depression, 1900-1940," 51-59.

161 Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 70; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Norma Switzer Jackson 1996, 138; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Chester Williams 1996, 145; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Emroy Kermit Sayers 1996, 159.

in there, had them moved in there. We fixed it up to suit ourselves." The stone, or oldest part of the structure, originally contained two rooms upstairs and two rooms downstairs. After the Switzer family acquired the old hotel, several new frame additions enlarged the house. "In the corner section, we found a frame building, and added it in there, and I used it for my dining room. ...And then we put some more additions onto it, and made me a kitchen-dining room, and then on the other side, we made a place to go in, you know, just went around the house and made what you wanted."[162]

During the dust and windstorms of the mid-1930s, the bell tower on top of the First Baptist Church was blown off. (*See figure 36. First Baptist Church, 1943.*) No tower was ever reconstructed; however, oral accounts and historic photographs from the mid-twentieth century suggest that a bell was subsequently restored to the top of the church. The Masonic Hall was also permanently damaged during a windstorm. (*See figure 37. Masonic Hall, 1943.*) As Bernice A. Bates recalled, "after the windstorm hit this building, ...it took the roof off of it and almost ruined the building. And it happened about two months after they dropped the insurance. They never had enough money to replace it, so it stood there for a while and finally it was torn down."[163]

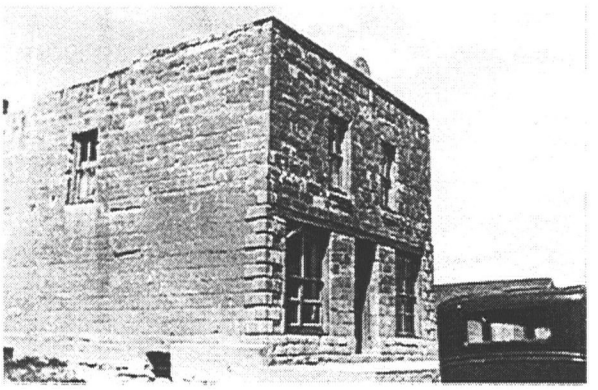


Figure 37.
Masonic Hall, Nicodemus, 1943. (Source: Belleau.)

Despite the numerous hardships of the period, the community provided additional outlets for recreation. Sometime during the second quarter of the twentieth century, two new baseball fields were established. Members of an all women's baseball club played on an informal or "makeshift ball diamond...just to the right of the old Masonic Hall" in the early 1930s. A more formal field was laid out in the 1940s northwest of the townsite on the north side of US Highway 24, in a vacant bottom area or draw, "right there where the Bates family lives now."[164]



Figure 36.
The First Baptist Church, 1943 Note the lack of stucco, and loss of the belltower. (Source: William J. Belleau, "The Nicodemus Colony of Graham County, Kansas." Masters thesis, Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas. [Belleau])



Figure 38.
Township Hall, 1943. Note trees planted in front of the building and the post and rail fencing. (Source: Belleau.)

162 Interview with Ora Switzer, 4/16/2001, 53. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

163 Fraser, "Architectural Development," 46; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas." Interview with Ora W. Switzer 1983, 4; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates 1983, 10.

164 Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Mary E. A. Gage 1983, 11; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ada and Alvin Bates 1983, 7; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with L'Ray Scott 1996, 219.

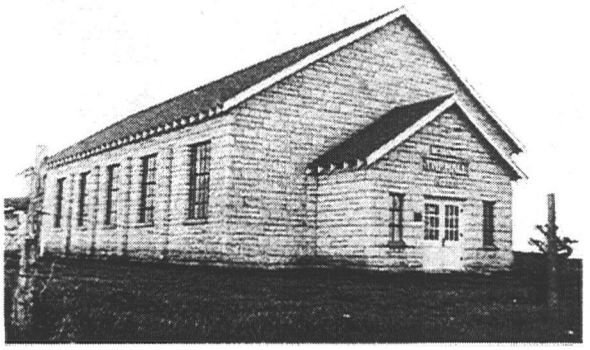


Figure 39.
Another 1943 view of the Township Hall. (Source: Belleau.)

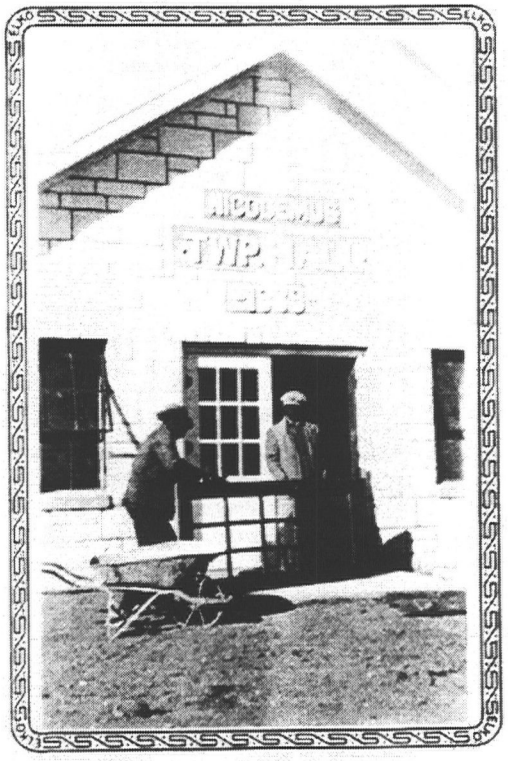


Figure 40.
Men working on the Township Hall, ca. 1939. (Source: HABS, Nicodemus NHL files.)

In 1937, construction work was begun on the Nicodemus Township Hall, a WPA funded project. *(See figures 38. through 41. Photographs of the new Township Hall.)* The

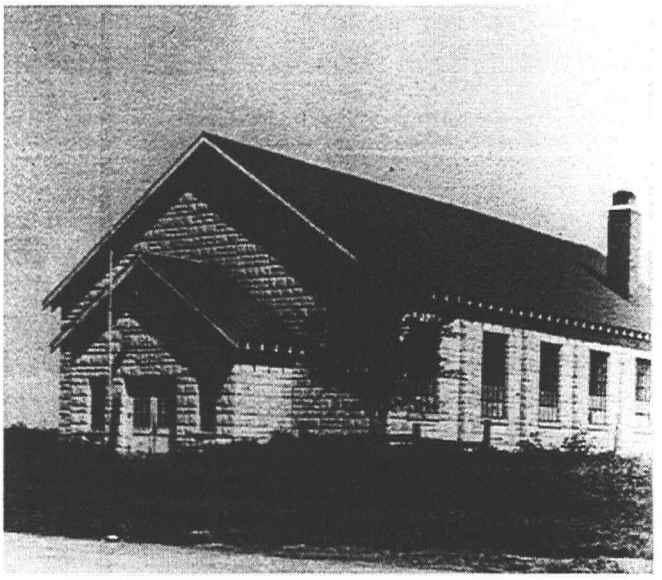


Figure 41.
Township Hall, 1949. Note tree and flagpole. (Source: Van B. Shaw, "Nicodemus, Kansas: A Study in Isolation." Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, 1951. Available: Kansas State University. [Shaw, KSU])

contract for the building was supervised by Earl Alexander. Garold Napue was head carpenter and the magnesia limestone was taken from a quarry northwest of Penokee. Rock from the Penokee quarry was used because it was "a more solider rock than we had right around here. The rock we had around right close here was more soft and would deteriorate quicker." Two years later in 1939, the new Township Hall was dedicated and soon became the center for the area's social and cultural activities. Prior to the Township Hall, social events were held in various places around town, most frequently in the old Masonic Hall. The completion of the new building also initiated a gradual move of Nicodemus's historic commercial and social center one block east to the intersection of Washington Avenue *(See figure 42. Washington Avenue looking west, 1940.)* and Second Street. This new social center was anchored by the Township Hall but also included the Priscilla Art Club building and later the DuPriest family 'Blow-In' Café.[165] The town also had a post office. *(See figure 43. Nicodemus post office, 1943.)*

[165] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 74; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ordral and Alvena Alexander 1983, 12; "Townsite Plan, Circa 1950, Nicodemus, Kansas," in *Promised Land on the Solomon* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Government Printing Office, 1986), xi; Ms. Carol Alexander to Sherda Williams. Facsimile, January 19, 2001. One resident recalled that the town used to celebrate the dedication of Township Hall on October 17th each year. Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Joetta A. Nevins and Wray A. Petrie, 1996, 248.



Figure 42.
Washington Avenue looking west, 1940. Note the Township Hall on the right with the Masonic Hall, general store, and First Baptist Church in the background, and the Fletcher-Switzer residence in the background on the left. (From *Promised Land on the Solomon.* Source: Black American West Museum, Denver, Colorado.)



Figure 43.
Verna Napue outside the Nicodemus post office, date uncertain. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)



Figure 44.
The A.M.E. Church, 1943. Note lack of stucco. (Source: Belleau.)

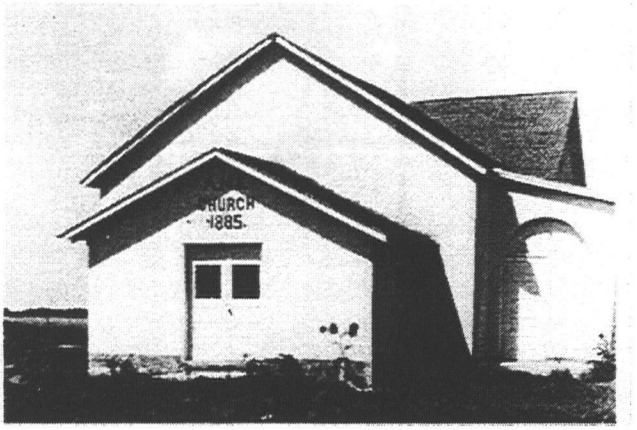


Figure 45.
A.M.E. Church, 1949. Note the application of stucco since the 1943 image. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

Sometime during the 1940s, the A.M.E. Church structure received a new coat of stucco. (*See figures 44. and 45. A.M.E. Church, 1943 and 1949.*) Donald Moore recalled that his uncle did the work. "That was in the '40s, I believe. I used to tend him with mud."[166]

Prior to World War II, dugouts and sod-ups, while fewer, were still present in both Nicodemus and the larger Township. Two dugouts in town, which have since been filled in, were remembered, one 'down by the Villa,' and another 'across from and behind the schoolhouse.' Van Shaw remembered the Rev. Austin Smith built what he called an 'adobe' or 'rammed earth' house during his stay in the early 1940s. (*See figure 46. Rev. Austin Smith home.*) "They went to the creek and got lime to whitewash it inside. This was the Rev. Mr. Smith and his wife, and he built forms, got the clay and rammed it." The Rev. Austin Smith lived south of Bogue near the Samuels cemetery.[167]

Both cellars and dugouts also served as convenient storage facilities. After ice was cut from the river, it would be covered with straw, wrapped in canvas and stored underground. "They'd get ice out of the river, and it'd last until the summer....Two or three families would get together and go down when the water freeze about two feet deep, something like that, and they'd saw it and load it out." Several residents recalled an ice house on G.M. Sayers's *(See figure 47. G.M. Sayers and family)* property in Nicodemus "right were [Billie] Brogden's house is." Others also recalled that ice was stored and sold from a silo, "across the highway from Robert Brogden in the field near the windmill that is there." A dugout near Stockton also served as a local storage facility for ice. During warm months, ice could be purchased at either place for use in residential basements or cellars.[168]

Despite its relatively small population, throughout the first half of the twentieth century the Nicodemus townsite remained an important social center for blacks throughout the larger region. Many residents recalled that Nicodemus would be nearly abandoned during the week but that on holidays and weekends it was a lively place. People would come in from their farms and surrounding communities to attend church and socialize. It was not unusual for one to two hundred people to be in town on Sunday. Through the 1940s and into the early 1950s, Velva Williams operated a gas station and restaurant in the old Sayers General Store. *(See figures 48.*

[166] Interview with Donald Moore, 4/18/2001, 149. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report. In this context, mud refers to the viscous stucco.

[167] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Norma S. Jackson and Orlo Van Duvall, 1996, 137; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Emroy K. Sayers, 1996, 155; Interview with Freddie and Ivalee Switzer, 4/17/2001, 82-83. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Dr. and Mrs. Van Shaw, 5/12/2001, 333-334. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

[168] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Lester V. Napue, 1996, 358; Nicodemus Township Board to Steve Linderer, Superintendent, Nicodemus NHS, January 11, 2001; Interview with Bertha Carter and Nathaniel Moore, 4/18/2001, 123. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Pearlena Moore, 4/20/2001, 203, Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

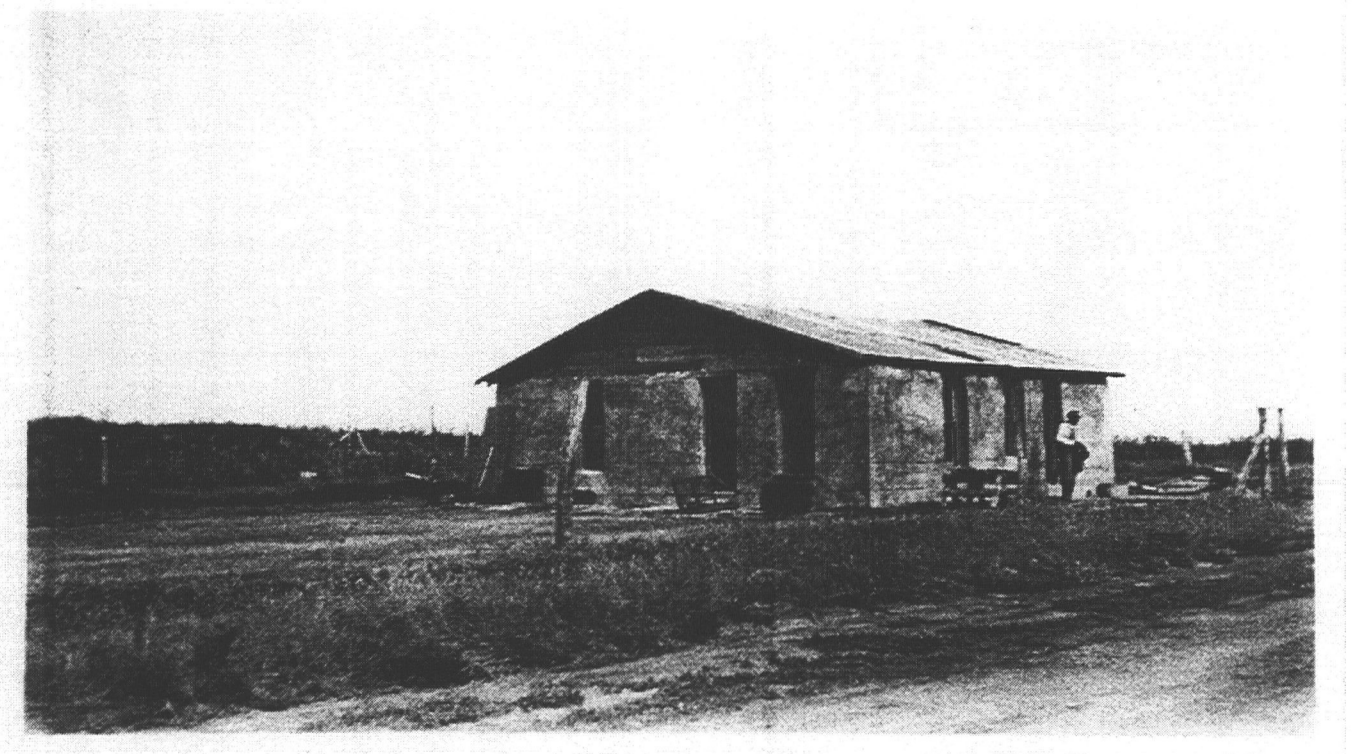


Figure 46.
Rev. Austin Smith's house, constructed of straw, mud, and chicken wire, Nicodemus, 1949. The house was located on the west side of the street across from Ernestine's Bar-B-Q along the highway. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)



Figure 47.
The G.M. Sayers family. Mr. Sayers, brother of W.L. Sayers, was one of the early postmasters of Nicodemus. Mrs. Sayers worked as his assistant for many years. Mr. Sayers was also a schoolteacher. (Source: Bellau.)

and 49. General store building, 1943.) The restaurant was only open for business on Sundays "when the church turnout [made] it worthwhile."[169]

With its changing role, the Nicodemus townsite evolved. By the end of the first half of the twentieth century, property use within the town site began to reflect a gradual evolution from strictly residential and commercial lots to mixed residential and agricultural development. By the end of the first half of the twentieth century, a majority of the town, including most of the southern half and northwestern quarter, was plowed as fields and contained animal pens, granaries, and other agricultural features. Aerial photos from 1938 and 1949 also reflect this fact (*See figures 55. and 56.*).[170]

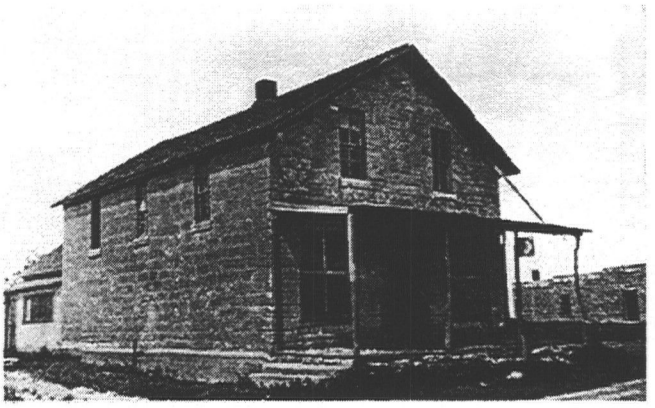


Figure 48.
General store in Nicodemus, 1943. (Source: Belleau.)



Figure 49.
Verna Napue, date uncertain, outside the Nicodemus general store. Note the gas pump. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

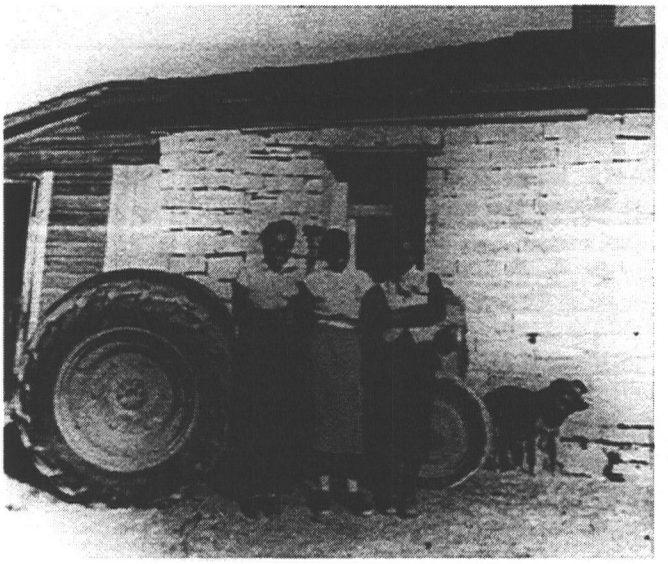


Figure 50.
Carlene, Yvonee, and Phyllis Dabney, date uncertain. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

169 Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with L'Ray Scott 1996, 205, 211; "Wheat Town," 29.
170 "Townsite Plan, Circa 1950, Nicodemus, Kansas," in *Promised Land on the Solomon* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Government Printing Office, 1986), xi.

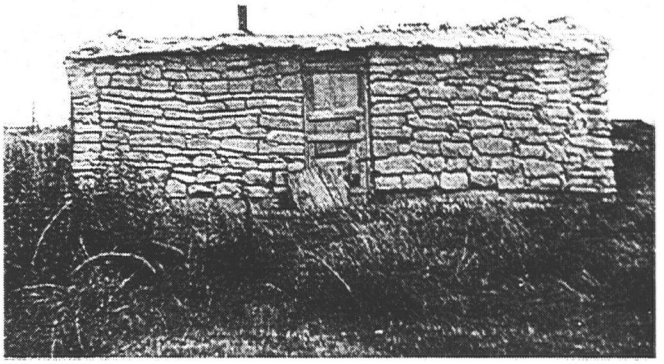








Figure 51. (top left)
A "pioneer" home in Nicodemus, 1943. (Source: Belleau.)

Figure 52. (bottom left)
Mrs. Rosa Belle Clark, who emigrated to Nicodemus in 1885. (Source: Belleau.)

Figure 53. (top right)
Mr. Abram T. Hall, age 92. (Source: Belleau.)

Figure 54. (bottom right)
Mr. and Mrs. George Moore, who arrived from Kentucky in 1878. (Source: Belleau.)

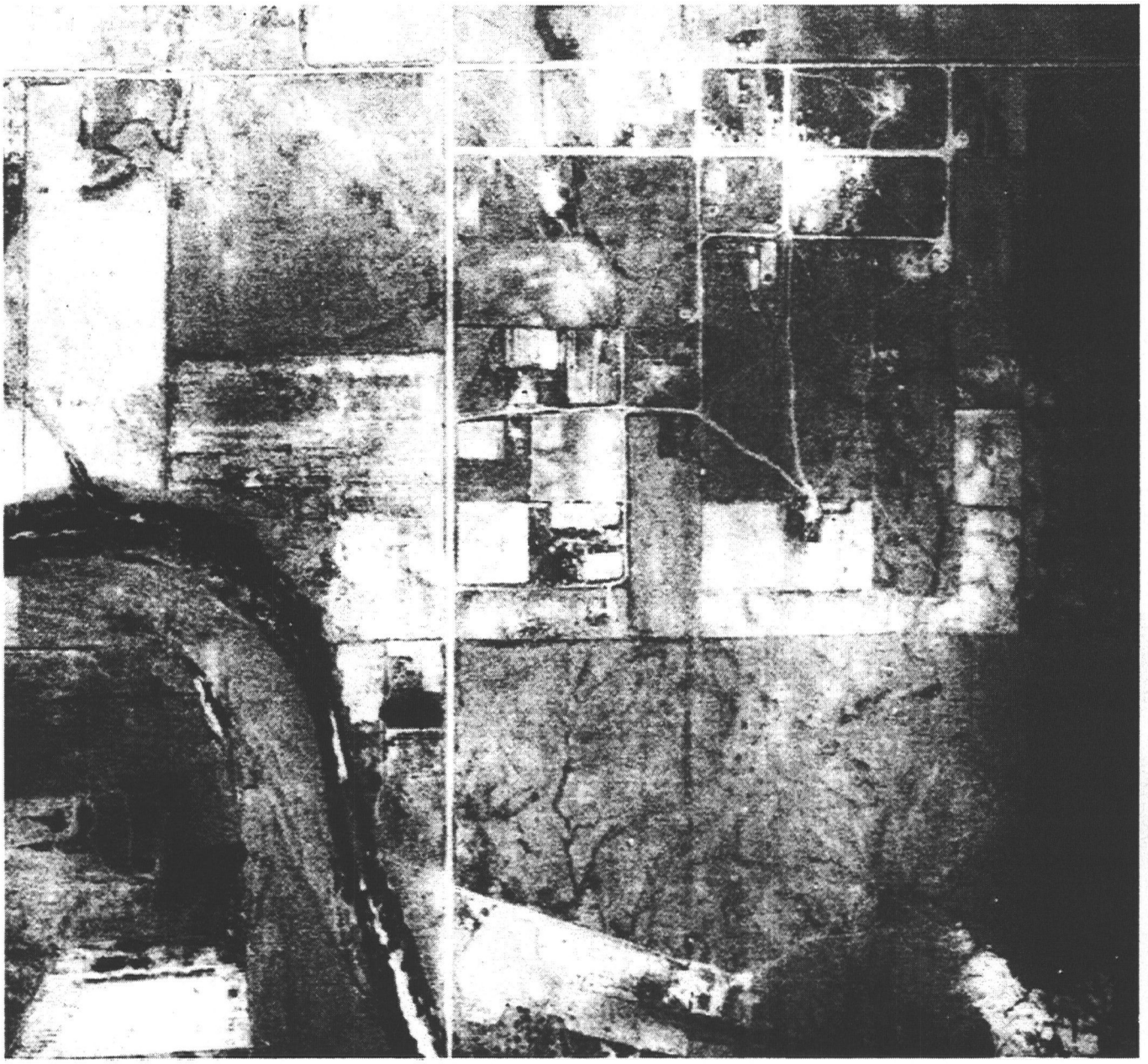


Figure 55.
Detail, 1938 USDA aerial photograph of Graham County, including Nicodemus townsite. (Source: National Archives, College Park, Maryland.)

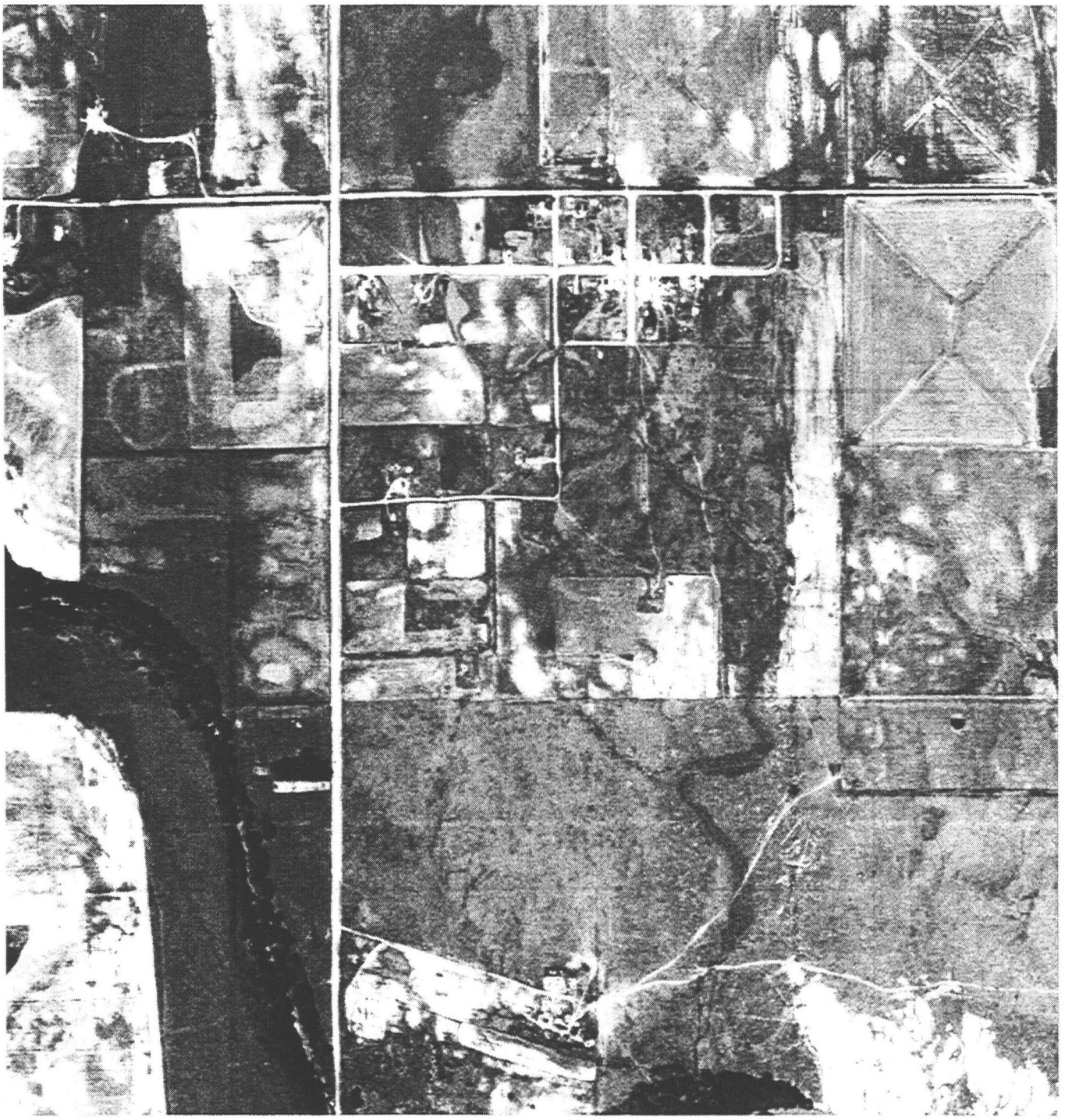


Figure 56.
Detail, 1949 USDA aerial photograph of Graham County, Kansas, including the Nicodemus townsite. Note the clear delineation of the northwestern quarter of Section 1. (Source: National Archives, College Park, Maryland.)

Agricultural Recovery

See figures 57. through 62. Farming activities around Nicodemus.

Agricultural recovery was gradual. As Alverize Berland recalled, "I farmed from 1934, and I planted some grain, but I never raised a crop until 1936. Nothing. And from then on we raised pretty good crops. We haven't had too many failures since." The cash crops grown during this period were primarily wheat and corn, but prior to mid-century wheat was the primary crop. "Wheat was the main money crop." "As long as I remember, we raised wheat." "This is wheat country out here. They didn't raise too much corn; they didn't raise milo like they raising now, and they didn't do too much summerflower and them. That came along later." Other small grains grown included sorghum, cane, sedan, barley, rye, and some milo, and milo-maize. Many of these minor crops were considered feed for livestock and fowl. August Dabney remembered that his father planted "different stuff for the cattle to eat....cane, you know, with big heads, anything with big heads and grain on it."[171]

Up through the first half of the twentieth century most agricultural work was accomplished with horsepower. Teams turning the fields for sowing and during harvest time pulled headers, threshing machines, and shellers. Sometime during the mid- to late 1930s, the first farmers in the Township began to purchase tractors. "[There were] very few tractors in the country when I first come around this country. Lon Alexander, he was about the first who went to the tractor. He got a brand new John Deere back there in the '30s; must've been about '33, I think." Other farmers who purchased tractors in the 1930s included James R. Bates' and Raymond Groves Jr.'s fathers. Aside from these few, most farmers continued to use horsepower. In fact it was not until the mid- to late 1940s that a majority of Nicodemus area farms became mechanized. "It just gradually come in. It didn't start coming in until the '40s." Ultimately the transition from horsepower to mechanized farming was an individual decision, largely dependent upon the scale of farming practiced.[172]

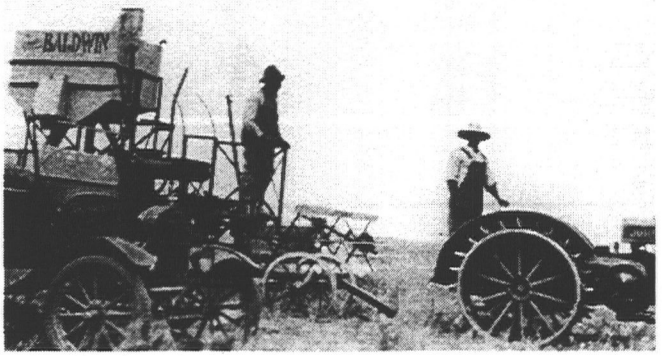


Figure 57.
Early use of mechanized farm equipment. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

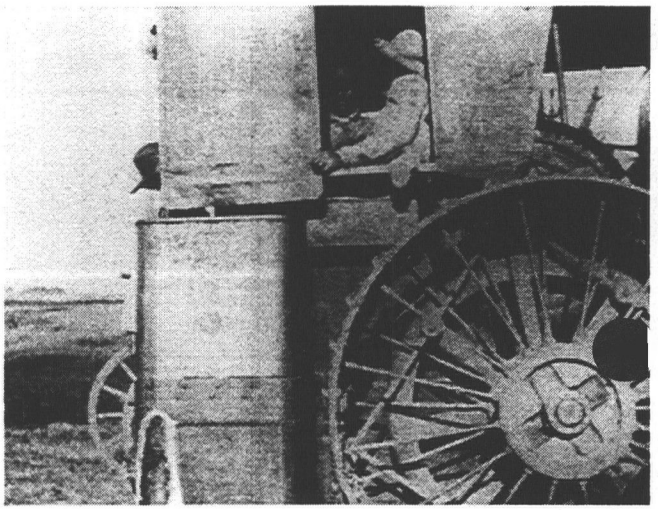


Figure 58.
Mr. Scruggs and Homer White in a tractor cab. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

171 Interview with Alverize Berland, 4/24/2001, 305. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with August Dabney, 5/10/2001, 354. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Raymond Groves Jr., 5/13/2001, 401. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with James Rudolph Bates, 4/19/2001, 155, Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

172 Interview with James Rudolph Bates, 4/19/2001, 159. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Raymond Groves Jr., 5/13/2001, 403. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Winfred Bronson, 4/20/2001, 221. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with August Dabney, 5/10/2001, 361. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Carlene Reid, 5/9/2001, 345-346. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

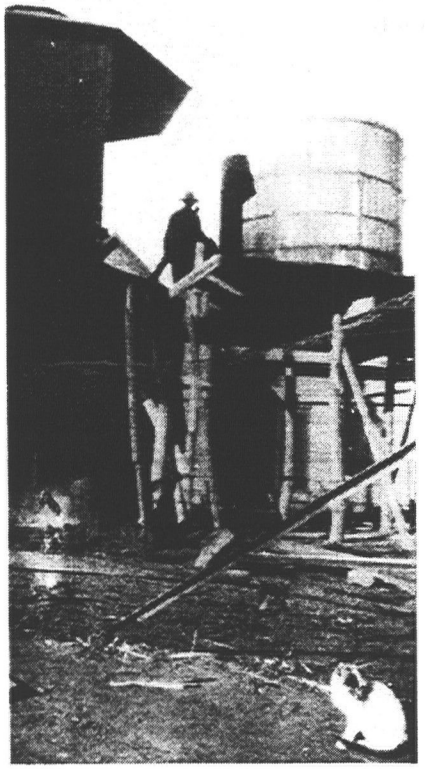


Figure 59. Alexander/Sturgeon Farm complex east of Bogue, including silo* and fence. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.) *Note: although this photograph is labeled "silo in background, cat in foreground" it is also possible that this feature may be a water tank.

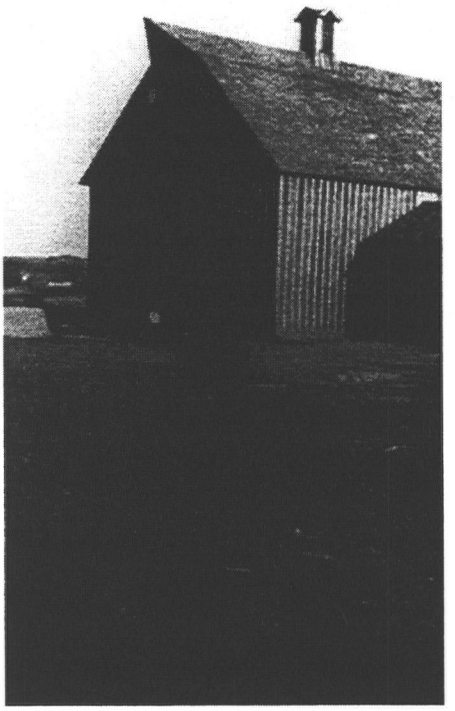


Figure 60. A barn on the Sturgeon farm, date uncertain. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

Because most of their crops, livestock, and gardens were destroyed during the early 1930s, many residents were forced to depend upon government foodstuffs. During this period, the G.M. Sayers general store served as a site for the distribution of food. Families would fill out forms requesting goods based on need. A delivery would be made from Hill City to the Sayers store in Nicodemus once a month. Canned pork and beef, fruit, dried fruit, potatoes, onions, syrup, sugar, coffee, powdered milk, dried eggs, rice, oatmeal, cornmeal, flour, and lard were typical foodstuffs. Residents often called the food rationing 'Hooverizing.' During this period, the G.M. Sayers store was the only one in town that sold gasoline. Photographs from this period document that it had a gasoline pump out front.[173]

Despite the expansion of agriculture throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth century, remnants of pre-settlement native prairie grass may have survived in limited areas up

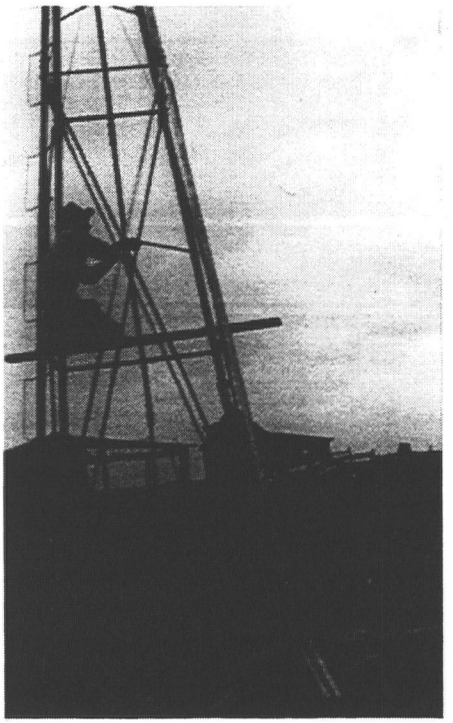


Figure 61. Man building a windmill at Lon Alexander's first farm, west of Sharyn Dowdell's current property. Date uncertain. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

[173] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Clarence Sayers 1996, 149; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with L'Ray Scott 1996, 219; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Helen J. Dabney 1996, 241.

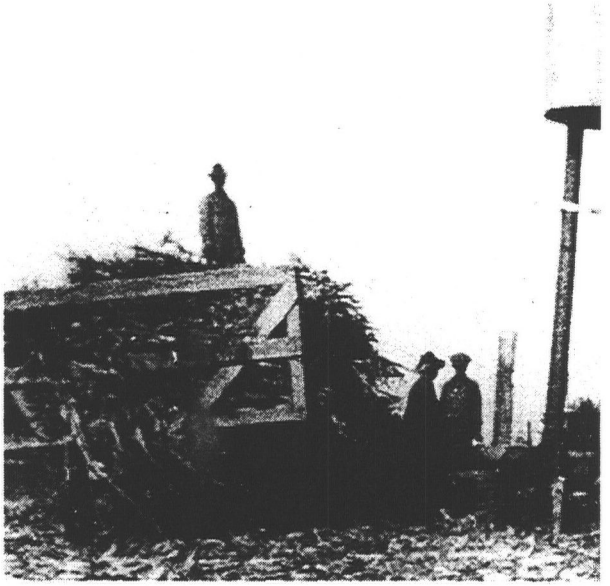


Figure 62.
Wagon loaded with corn. (Source: KSHS.)

through the mid-twentieth century. LeRoy Van Duvall recalled that as a child, there were still places where the prairie grass grew quite tall.[174]

Animal Husbandry

As in earlier periods, farmers continued to raise a variety of livestock and fowl. Dairy cows, hogs, and fowl clearly provided important dietary supplements to Nicodemus families, but just as significantly were a dependable source of revenue. Many farmers kept chickens, geese and ducks on their property. Numerous farm families also took care of hundreds or sometimes thousands of chickens and turkeys as commercial ventures; these birds were frequently obtained through mail order catalogs. Turkeys were fattened all year long and sold in bulk before major holidays. Many farmers did their own butchering of cattle and hogs. The meat would then be smoked or salted for preservation. At butchering time, families would often share what they had with their neighbors. August Dabney recalled that his family's farm produced eight to ten gallons of cream a week, and raised 300 to 400 chickens and 500 to 1,000 turkeys. The increased popularity and accessibility of the automobile throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and the gradual improvement of county roads, allowed area farmers to bring perishable produce to market faster. The two closest markets to Nicodemus were in Bogue and Hill City. A major sale barn for cows, hogs, chickens and turkeys existed in Hill City. Sales would take place regularly all week long but the main sale day was Saturday. Saleable farm produce was regularly hauled into town each weekend for 'trading.' "We used to milk the cows for what we called 'trading,' you know, milk your cattle, separate your cream, and take it to town on the weekend. That's what they called 'trading' back in them days."[175]

Natural Resources

Throughout the period, regional residents were forced to supplement their foodstuffs with local native vegetation and animals. Wild possum, raccoons, turkeys and pheasant were hunted regularly. Jack rabbits were a substantial part of the local diet. In the 1930s, the jack rabbits were so populous that they began to destroy crops. Local residents frequently formed hunting parties (*See figure 63. Photograph of hunters with rifles and jack rabbits.*) where the rabbits were herded into a central

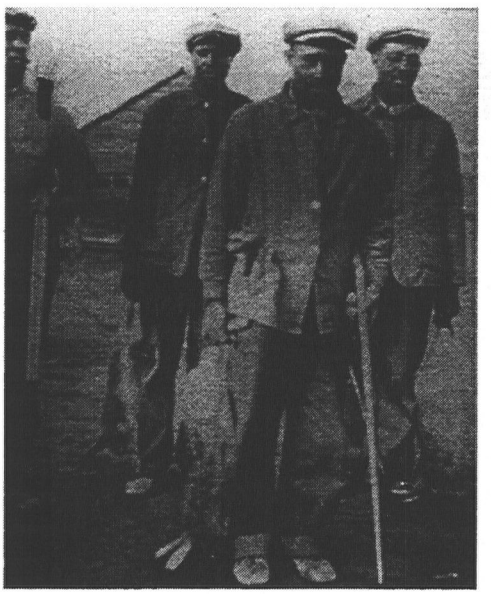


Figure 63.
Hunters with rifles and jack rabbits. Date uncertain. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

[174] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with LeRoy H. Van Duvall 1996, 369.

[175] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Betty J. J. Scroggins, Ruth E. J. Dobson, and Cynthia D. Napue 1996, 129; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Emroy K. Sayers 1996, 160; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Ora Switzer 1996, 176; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with L'Ray Scott 1996, 291, 221; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Orlando P. Napue and Armantha Napue 1996, 335; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Catherine W. Finlay 1996, 349; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Lester V. Napue 1996, 355-356; Interview with August Dabney, 5/10/2001, 355. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Clarence and Yvonne Sayers, 4/16/2001, 72. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

corral and clubbed to death. These 'rabbit drives' served to hold down the population. Jack rabbits pelts were sold for twenty-five cents each and the meat was eaten for breakfast, lunch and dinner, turned into sausage, baked, roasted, ground with pork, and prepared in a variety of ways.[176] Young Jack rabbits were preferred. "Oh that was our best eating, that rabbit....But during those days, you wouldn't have a meal sometimes, if you didn't have rabbit." As Pearlena Moore recalled, "I remember one evening we skinned a hundred rabbits, jackrabbits. We'd hang them up in the meat house, and Grandmother would take the legs and the back part of the rabbit, cut the meat off, then she'd take the neck part of the rabbit and the legs, and cook them....put onions on them and smother them down. Then you'd take the meat off and then would use pork and the rabbit, and make rabbit sausage. Oh, that was good! Wish I had some now!" Although fishing was largely recreational, to a lesser degree it also supplemented family diets. As Ernestine Van Duvall recalled, "father'd get up early in the morning and fish; have fish for breakfast." Catfish were a favorite although almost all fish were eaten. "[We caught] whatever was in there. Most of the time it was catfish. When it used to rain, the river'd swell up and it would back up, and when the river got to a certain height, it would back up into the farmer's fields. Then the water would go down, and it would trap the fish. Then everybody passed the word, 'There's fish!,' and you could get fish by the tubfulls. Tubfulls of catfish. You could just pick the fish up; they'd be flopping around. And then they had those turtles. Turtles were delicious! I sure miss them."[177]

The tough economic times forced regional residents to use every available resource. Few repairs or renovations were made to residences or farm structures. When he needed a new cattle barn, Emroy Sayers' father built a structure out of old fences insulated with packed tumbleweeds and a roof made out of poles covered with chicken wire and tumbleweeds. Several residents recalled packing dirt up in a bank against a foundation wall to provide additional insulation in inclement weather. The collection or scavenging of fuel sources was a regular activity. Sunflower stalks and dried corn cobs were used as fuel and dried cow chips continued to be regularly collected by both children and youth. "I'd take the wagon and the kids, and go and just pick up chips. Go ask these folks that had these cattle running, could we pick up chips, and we kept the pasture clean." "We'd carry big baskets or sacks and pick up chips....And there was plenty sunflowers. Used to break them off and put them in the stove; they was fast burning." "We had a few cobs every now and then, but cobs are just like lighting tissue paper. They'd get the stove real red for one minute, and before you could sit down the house was cold again....I picked many a sack full of them [cow chips] and a wagon full, that's when people had a lot of cows. They'd keep you warm, but you'd be awful busy carrying out ashes." Almost to a person, Township residents remembered gathering or cutting wood along the banks of the Solomon and other drainages. "We used to go down to the river, cut those trees, and trim them down, and bring them in by the load....We'd go down there and find good places where you could drive a team of horses." "We cut wood. We went on the river, and my dad cut and I helped him. We cut cottonwoods and then brought it in and cut it into smaller pieces, then take an axe and split it, so it would go into the stove. Firewood was the main fuel for the winter." On some occasions, discarded railroad ties were also collected, cut up and used for fuel.[178]

During the mid-1930s, new oil fields were developed in western Kansas. While a substantial number of oil wells were drilled on property south of the Solomon River

176 Rabbit skins were used on the wings of airplanes for insulation during the 1930s. See Angela Bates-Tompkins, "Review and Comment on 75% Draft [CLR]."

177 Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Emroy K. Sayers 1996, 160; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Leland Clark 1996, 276; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Wanda Adams 1996, 294; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Florence M. M. Howard 1996, 322; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Audrie G. McConnell 1996, 345; Interview with Ernestine Van Duvall, 4/19/2001, 188. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Pearlena Moore, 4/20/2001, 203. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with August Dabney, 5/10/2001, 360. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

178 Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Emroy K. Sayers 1996, 159; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Ernestine W. Van Duvall 1996, 167; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Wanda Adams 1996, 293; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with L'Ray Scott 1996, 220-221; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Charlesetta W. Bates 1996, 283; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Wanda Adams 1996, 291; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with LeRoy H. Van Duvall 1996, 370; Interview with Ora Switzer, 4/16/2001, 50. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with James Rudolph Bates, 4/19/2001, 163. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Pearlena Moore, 4/20/2001, 206. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Carlene Reid, 5/9/2001, 346. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Alverize Berland, 4/24/2001, 202. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Gene Napue, Sr., 5/11/2001, 381. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

particularly in Wild Horse and Morlan Townships, only a few families in Nicodemus Township leased their land to oil companies.[179]

Coal was an important source of heating fuel from the late nineteenth through the third quarter of the twentieth century. Coal was regularly brought in by train and delivered to Bogue, Norton, and other regional towns. Township residents would then pick up their coal for the winter months. Coal was frequently mixed with other fuel sources in pot-bellied stoves because it could hold heat better than wood, cow chips or corn cobs. Some residents recalled that a Mr. Lewis sold coal to area residents from the old Baxter house. At least one resident recalled that coal was also mined on a limited scale in the area surrounding Nicodemus. As a child, LeRoy Van Duvall remembered playing in and around large open mine pits.[180]

The Home Farm

Farmsteads generally contained a number of outbuildings adjacent to and surrounding the main residence. Most of the outbuildings mentioned during oral interviews pertained to the care of livestock and fowl. These included a granary or silo, a barn for horses, milking cows and hay storage, a hog pen, a turkey house, and a chicken house. Often farms also had a meat or smoke house used for preserving meats, a separator house or cellar where milk and cream was stored, and of course the privy. Each of these structures was more or less permanent except the privy. As Ernestine Van Duvall recalled, "We had holes dug along the way, 'cause you had to move them every spring, just move it over, cover the old hole in and start anew." In addition, when cars, trucks and tractors became common, garages were also constructed. Other features within a typical landscape included pumps, windmills (usually located adjacent to a well), cisterns, and cattle corrals.[181]

Basements or cellars were also common features on farms. Basements were usually dug underneath a house and were generally accessed from an exterior stairway. Cellars were frequently independent structures that resembled dugouts, either partly or wholly underground. Most basements and cellars were used identically, for storage of meats or canned goods, or less frequently protection from storms. Wray Petrie recalled that "my brother had dug one under the house when we were out. It wasn't finished or anything, but we did use it like for the potatoes that we raised, and that's about all we used it for." The Switzer cellar was "kind of like a dugout ...down in the ground with a top on it, and then steps to go down in there. ...That's where we kept our potatoes." Ernestine Van Duvall's cellar was "separate from the house. It had its own dirt roof, and the steps where you'd go down in there. And it stayed cool in the summertime down in there, and they'd put a door that would slant on the outside and then another after you'd go down the steps. And had shelves built all around. That's where we'd set the fruit and the tomatoes, whatever we had to can, that's where it went."[182]

[179] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 73; Angela Bates-Tompkins, Personal Communication, February 2000. According to Angela Bates-Tompkins, the Alexander and Duvall families, the Napue family south of Bogue, the Charlie Clark family north east of Bogue, and Glenn family on eastern edge of Hill City, have or have had oil wells since the 1930s.

[180] Interview with August Dabney, 5/10/2001, 362-363. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Carlene Reid, 5/9/2001, 347. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with LeRoy H. Van Duvall 1996, 372; Nicodemus Township Board to Steve Linderer, Superintendent, Nicodemus National Historic Site, January 11, 2001.

[181] Interview with Agnes and Leon Stephens, 4/23/2001, 277-279. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Katherine Buckner, 5/10/2001, 376. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with August Dabney, 5/10/2001, 358. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Carlene Reid, 5/9/2001, 343. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Raymond Groves Jr., 5/13/2001, 407. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Alverize Berland, 4/24/2001, 301. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Donald Moore, 4/18/2001, 145. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Pearlena Moore, 4/20/2001, 203. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with James Rudolph Bates, 4/19/2001, 155-158. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Bertha Carter and Nathaniel Moore, 4/18/2001, 130. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Freddie and Ivalee Switzer, 4/17/2001, 84. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Ernestine Van Duvall, 4/19/2001, 187. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

[182] Interview with Emma Griffie, 5/11/2001, 391-392. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Bertha Carter and Nathaniel Moore, 4/18/2001, 123. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Wray Petrie, 4/17/2001, 112. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Freddie and Ivalee Switzer, 4/17/2001, 83. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Ernestine Van Duvall, 4/19/2001, 188. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

Streets and Roads

See figure 64. Detail, 1940 highway map of Graham County.

The road conditions within Nicodemus did not dramatically improve between the 1880s and the 1930s. Many of the Township roads were still dirt. Thick yellow mud covered Nicodemus's streets and one resident recalled that when it rained, the mud had no bottom. In 1931, however, US Highway 24, the old 'White Way,' was blacktopped, improving regional east-west transportation.[183]

Other WPA development in the region included the construction and grading of many local roads. John Buckner Sr. remembered that his father had been employed by the WPA and used his horse teams to build roads leading into town and in the larger Township. Winfred Bronson also worked on local roads under the WPA. "We built that road down here, a mile south of 'Demus and go west up through there ...but we cut them ditches and stuff, rolled all that in with wheelbarrows. Sure did! We elevated that road, and we had wheelbarrows, made a ditch for the water to go."[184]

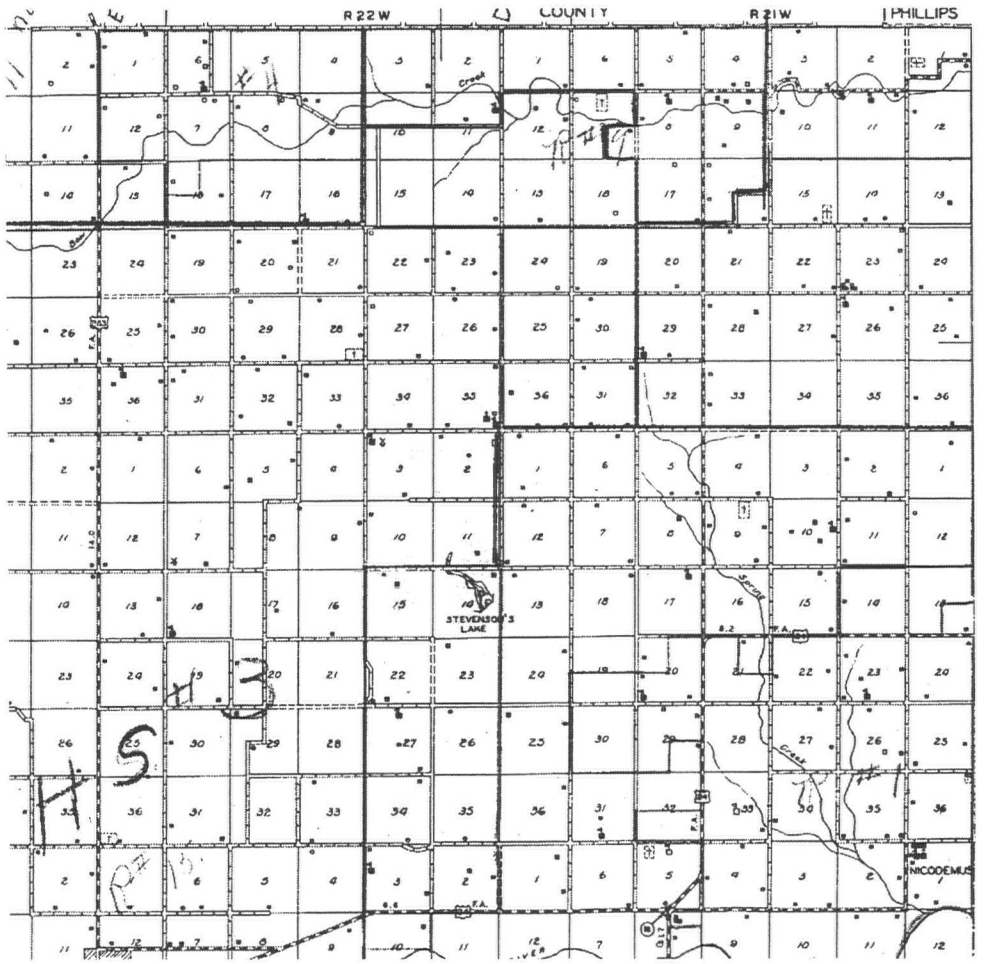


Figure 64.
Detail, 1940 Graham County, Kansas, Highway and Transportation Map prepared by the Kansas State Highway Department in cooperation with the Federal Works Agency, Public Roads Administration. Hand annotated in 1946 for use in school districting. See town of Nicodemus, lower right corner.

Roads indicated with dark and light patterning, Highway 24 for example, are described as "bituminous surfaced." Most other township roads are referred to as "improved earth." (Source: KSHS.)

183 Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates 1983, 24; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Billie B. Brogden and Robert Brogden 1996, 301.

184 Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with John W. Buckner, Sr. and Loretta F. Buckner 1996, 121; Interview with Winfred Bronson, 4/20/2001, 219. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

Planting

During the early 1940s, 'Aunt' Blanche White founded a 4H Club in Nicodemus to encourage older children of the Township to learn about agricultural activities. The 4H movement was part of a federal effort to aimed at instructing young people in citizenry and agriculture. One of the many activities and projects she supervised was the general beautification of town. In the mid-1940s, she and her students planted several Siberian elm trees adjacent to Township Hall. During his tenure with the 4H Club, Freddie Switzer recalled, "we planted a lot of cottonwoods, and them Chinese [elms], and we mixed a variety up, all different kinds....box elders. Sister White did that. Blanche White. We planted all kinds to see what would survive." In addition, several apricot trees were planted. The 4H Club also taught students how to recognize and pick local medicinal herbs such as horehound, wild sage, coriander, ginger, and garlic.[185]

Landscaping efforts were also carried out on an individual level. Because the Solomon and other drainages were considered common property, trees and other wild plants were often dug up from these areas and moved adjacent to residences. Native and non-native trees planted included cottonwood, elm, walnut and spruce. "That was the trend to everybody else that lived down there [Nicodemus]. Everybody, where they moved, they planted trees for shade." As Katherine Buckner recalled, "my Dad would [go] down to the river, dig up a tree, bring it up, and plant it in the yard, so we had a bunch of trees....and he did this to have a windbreak" "If we'd see a tree we wanted, we'd go down and dig up one when we went to the creek, and plant 'em ourselves. That's the way we'd get shade trees fixed around during them days." Several families had small numbers of fruit trees including peach, plum, and to a lesser degree, apple and pear. Less frequently wild roses and plum bushes were transplanted from the Solomon and other drainages. However, despite their best efforts, the survival of trees on the Kansas prairie was dependent upon the unforgiving environment. "We would save rainwater to water them, but those trees just never did do much good for some reason. They never did."[186]

Emancipation Celebration

See. figure 65. Emancipation Day Celebration announcement, 1939.

Scruggs's Grove continued to hold the Emancipation Celebration each summer. Several facilities were established there during the first half of the twentieth


52nd
EMANCIPATION
Day Celebration
NICODEMUS, KANSAS
JULY 31—AUGUST 1, 1939
MASTER OF CEREMONIES ..... EARL ALEXANDER
ENTERTAINMENT
BASEBALL GAMES
BOXING MATCHES
Three Matches Each Day
PLATFORM DANCE EVERY AFTERNOON AND EVENING
FLOOR SHOW BY DIXIE MELODY ENTERTAINERS

Figure 65.
Emancipation Day Celebration announcement, 1939.

185 Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 75; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Clarence Sayers 1996, 150; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ada and Alvin Bates 1983, 20; Interview with Freddie and Ivalee Switzer, 4/17/2001, 93. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Betty J. J. Scroggins, Ruth E. J. Dobson, and Cynthia D. Napue 1996, 127.

186 Interview with August Dabney, 5/10/2001, 360. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Katherine Buckner, 5/10/2001, 371-372. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Ora Switzer, 4/16/2001, 48. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Agnes and Leon Stephens, 4/23/2001, 285. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Emma Griffie, 5/11/2001, 389. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Raymond Groves Jr., 5/13/2001, 406. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Ada Bates and Alvina Alexander, 4/23/2001, 238-239. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Pearlena Moore, 4/20/2001, 199. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Bertha Carter and Nathaniel Moore, 4/18/2001, 124. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Wray Petrie, 4/17/2001, 112-113. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

century including a dance stage or pavilion, food stands, and picnic tables. These facilities, however, may have been temporary, and only erected for the length of festivities. As Bertha Carter remembered, "they'd go up to the Hill City lumberyard and get the wooden two by sixes and make the platform, and tear it back down and take the lumber back when they got through." In addition, the baseball field across the road from the grove had stands and a formal backstop that was made of chicken wire.[187]

The Emancipation Celebration was still the biggest regional event of the year. As Albert Burks remembered in 1938, "we celebrate[d] four days in a large grove just outside of Nicodemus, and Negroes come from all over the state. There are about twelve barbecue pits dug and they are going all day barbecuing chickens, turkeys, ducks, pigs, sides of beef, etc. And there is stands that just sell chiterlings, coon, possum and cracklin' corn bread. The town constable and his force see that everyone is orderly."[188]

NICODEMUS AS A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CENTER, 1945–1956

See figures 56. and 66. aerial view of the townsite, 1949, and Graham County, Kansas map. Also see figure 88. Historic Period Plan, Nicodemus townsite, ca. 1945–1956.

Following a national trend, an increasing number of rural Kansas residents began to move to larger urban areas in search of better jobs after World War II. As a result, the population in northwestern Kansas, including Graham County, gradually decreased. Due to the disintegration of the smaller satellite communities in the Township and an increase of social activities within the townsite, Nicodemus again became a regional social and cultural center for African Americans in Graham County. Over the course of this period, a number of families moved back into town.

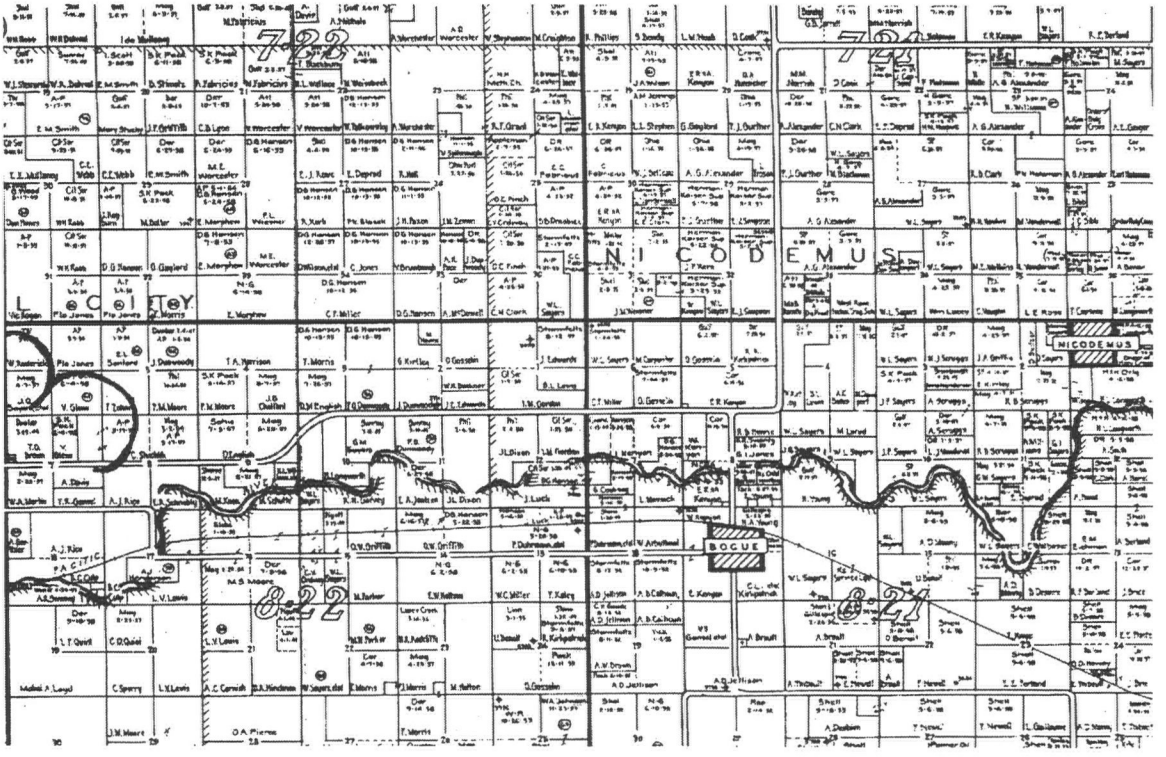


Figure 66. Detail, 1949 Graham County, Kansas map published by the Continental Map Company. See Nicodemus, far right, lower half of the map. Note the delineation of property ownership at the time. (Source: KSHS.)

[187] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Emroy K. Sayers 1996, 158; Interview with Bertha Carter and Nathaniel Moore, 4/18/2001, 135. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

[188] *American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940*, Interview with Ella Boney, 11/26/1938 (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html).

Physical Development of Townsite and Township

See figures 67. through 86. Photographic scenes of the Nicodemus community.

During this period of town resettlement, a number of structures were moved into Nicodemus. The School District #32 [or #38] building was moved into town in 1947 or 1948, "right up here on Main Street ...and they made a big house of it now." Initially structures were moved with a team of horses and skids. Movers "put big beams under them and they would drag them down across the fields or across the country, and just take off and go. And if they got stuck or something, well they'd have to go get somebody else's team of horses and tie more on." In subsequent years, moving was accomplished by truck. Moving operations were handled by a limited number of skilled people. 'Deak' King in Hill City, and Bethel Bigge (and later her son Tom) out of Stockton did most of the moving in the Township. As Donald Moore noted, "my mother's house over there, they moved it in. It come from way out north. Most all these houses been moved in. Switzer's, they moved it in, and over here Stokes, they moved that one in, and the restaurant Ernestine used to have up here, they moved that in from out on the farm. There's been lots of houses just moved in and moved out!"[189] The resettlement of Nicodemus also involved the reuse or renovation of existing structures. Some early attempts to preserve the historic structures of Nicodemus were made during this period. In 1949, the exterior facades of the First Baptist Church and the St. Francis Hotel were stuccoed to prevent further deterioration.[190] (*See figures 67. and 68. First Baptist Church and Sunday School class, 1949.*)



Figure 67.
The First Baptist Church, 1949. Note that the First Baptist Church has not yet been stuccoed. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)



Figure 68.
Sunday school, 1949. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

[189] Interview with Agnes and Leon Stephens, 4/23/2001, 277-278. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Donald Moore, 4/18/2001, 150-151, Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

[190] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 76.

Due to substantial postwar out-migration, the rural population of Nicodemus Township could not 'support' many of the school districts surrounding the town of Nicodemus. As a result, in 1945 all of the rural schools in Nicodemus Township were closed including the Fairview Schoolhouse in District No. 78, and the District No. 33 Schoolhouse. Only the schoolhouse in District No. 1, the town of Nicodemus, remained open. (*See figures 69., 70., and 84. Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse.*) During the same year, the former Fairview Schoolhouse was moved to the District No. 1 site to accommodate the increased enrollment. As school enrollment began to dwindle again in subsequent years, the old Fairview Schoolhouse at the District No. 1 site was purchased by the American Legion in 1952 and moved to the corner of Washington Avenue and Second Street, diagonally across from Township Hall. It was later renovated and used as the American Legion Hall, eventually replacing the Masonic Hall as a secondary meeting place for social occasions. Likewise in 1945, the District No. 33 Schoolhouse, an eighteen by twenty-five foot frame building, was purchased by the Priscilla Art Club and moved to their site west of and adjacent to the Township Hall lot.[191] (*See figure 72. Priscilla Art Club, 1949.*)

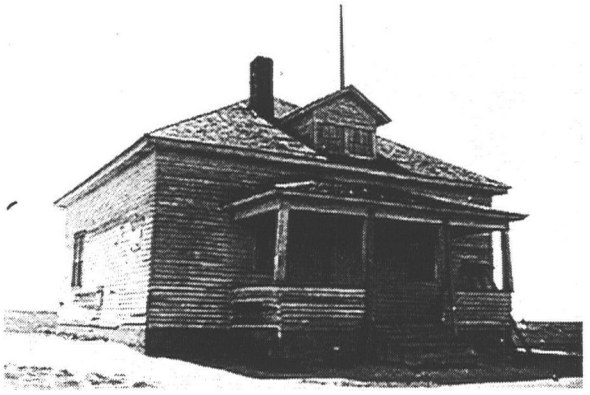


Figure 69.
Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse, 1943. (Source: Belleau.)



Figure 71.
Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse after electrification, date uncertain. A privy is visible to the rear, and the Fairview Schoolhouse to the right. (Source: KSHS.)

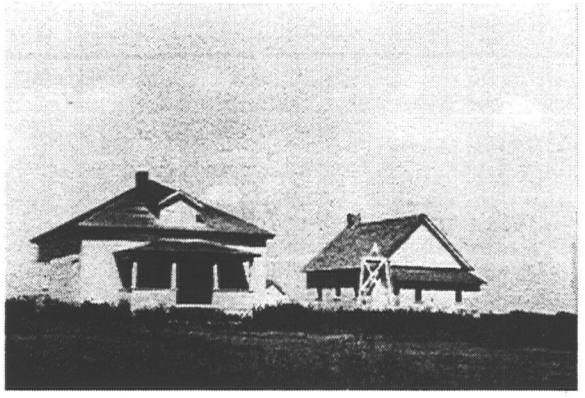


Figure 70.
1949 view of the Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse (left) and the adjacent Fairview schoolhouse, moved to this location by the American Legion. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

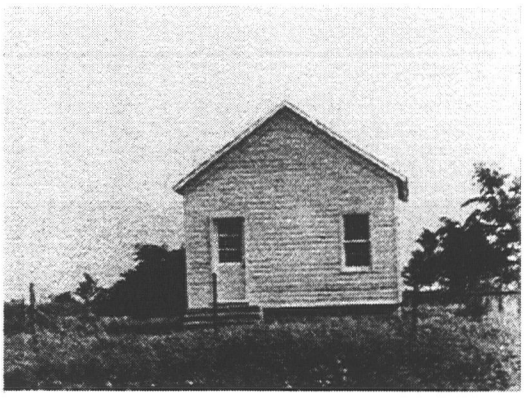


Figure 72.
Priscilla Art Club, 1949. Former District No. 33 Schoolhouse. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

[191] *Ibid.*, 75.

The A.M.E. Church, the former location of the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, formally closed its doors ca. 1947 due to a dwindling congregation.[192] The 'Blow In,' a local café, was established by Fredonia and Ray DuPriest in 1949. (*See figure 73. Blow In Café, 1949.*) The café was located in a building that had been moved into the Nicodemus townsite from the Township by a team of mules. The Blow In was located southwest of the Township Hall. The café closed a year later.[193]

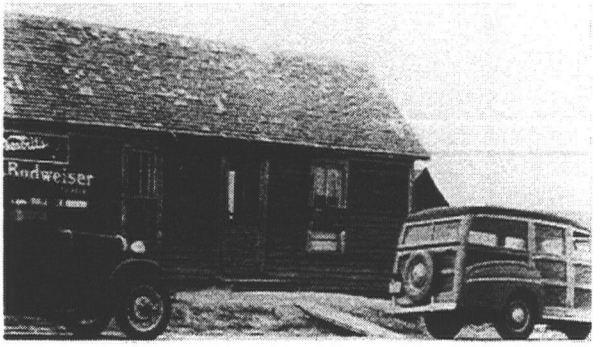


Figure 73.
Blow In Café, 1949. (Source:Shaw, KSU.)

In the process of burning off the vegetation on the site of the Mount Olive Cemetery in 1952, a prairie fire was started. The fire soon spread out of control and burned the Mount Olive Church and school. The church and school were not occupied at the time and had been abandoned for several decades. The limestone ruins of the Mount Olive Church marked the Nicodemus landscape up through the 1980s.[194]

Severe rains in 1951 and 1953 created flood conditions within Nicodemus Township. In 1951, Graham County experienced one of the worst floods in its history. In an effort to control flooding, the Webster Reservoir in western Rooks County was constructed in 1956. On a more local level, farmers began to construct holding ponds and terraces to retain the rain water in their fields rather than letting it run off.[195]

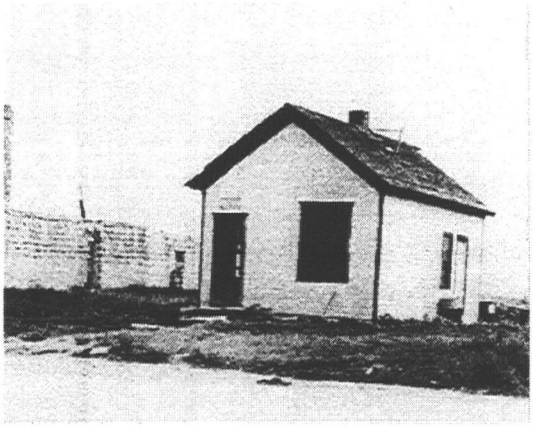


Figure 74.
Post office, 1949. (Source:Shaw, KSU.)

In 1953, President Eisenhower closed thousands of rural post offices across the United States in an effort to streamline postal delivery. On November 30, 1953, the Nicodemus post office located in the home of Reverend Joseph Wilson closed its doors and service to the Township by Star Route was initiated.[196] *(See figure 74. Nicodemus post office, 1949.)*

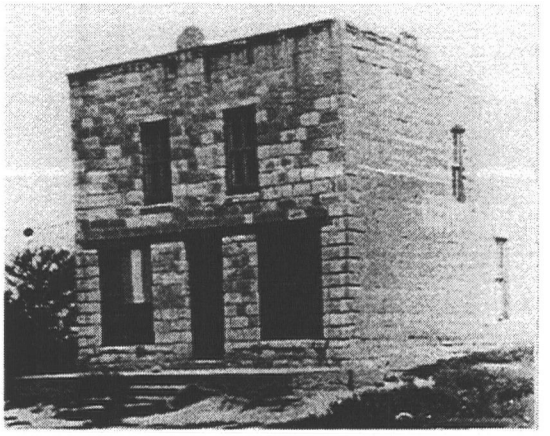


Figure 75.
Masonic Hall, 1949. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

[192] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Orlo O. Van Duvall 1983, 7; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Orlando P. Napue and Armantha Napue 1996, 335.

[193] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with L'Ray Scott 1996, 207.

[194] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ada and Alvin Bates 1983, 15.

[195] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 75; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas.' Interview with Bernice A. Bates 1983, 17.

[196] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 76.



Figure 76.
Methodist Parsonage, 1949. (Source:Shaw, KSU.)

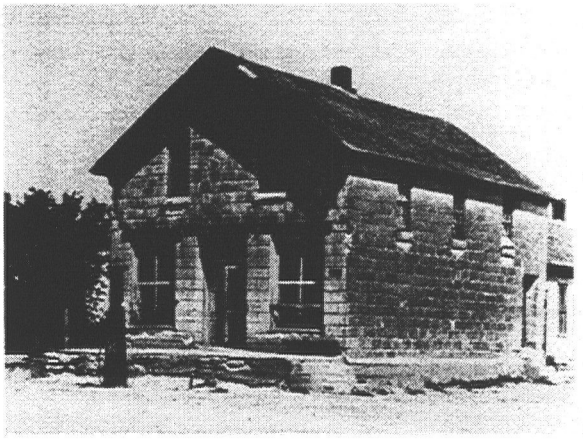


Figure 77.
Former general store, 1949. (Source:Shaw, KSU.)

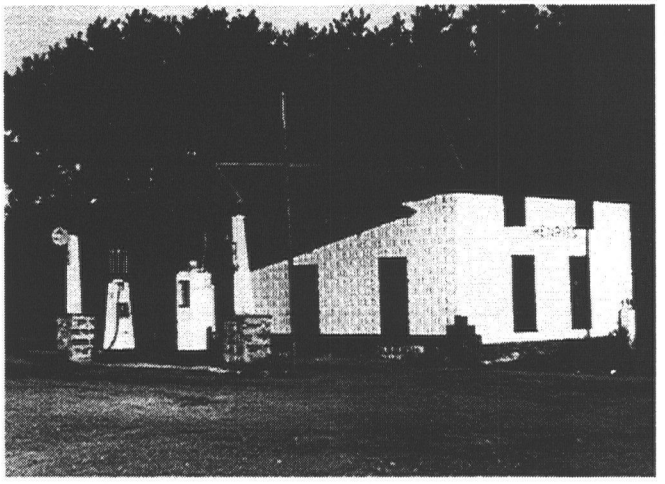


Figure 78.
Henries gas station, 1949. (Source:Shaw, KSU.)

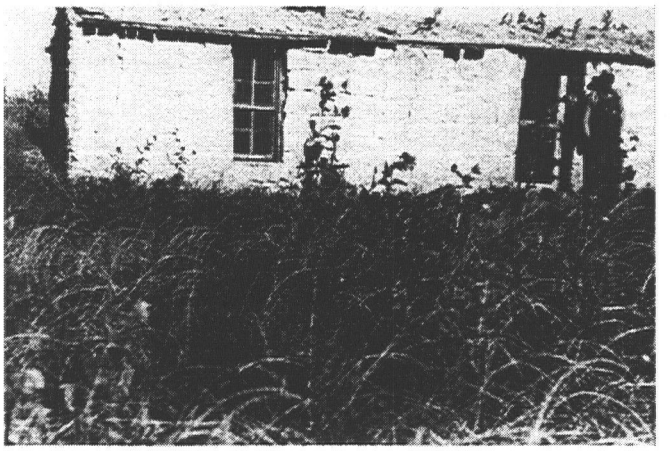


Figure 79.
"Pioneer" residence, Nicodemus, 1949. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

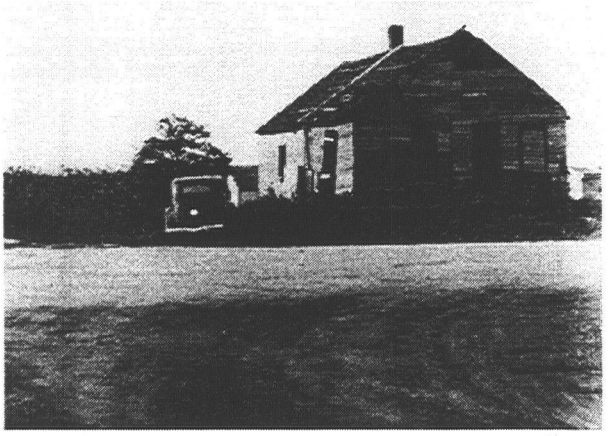


Figure 80.
House, Nicodemus, 1949. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

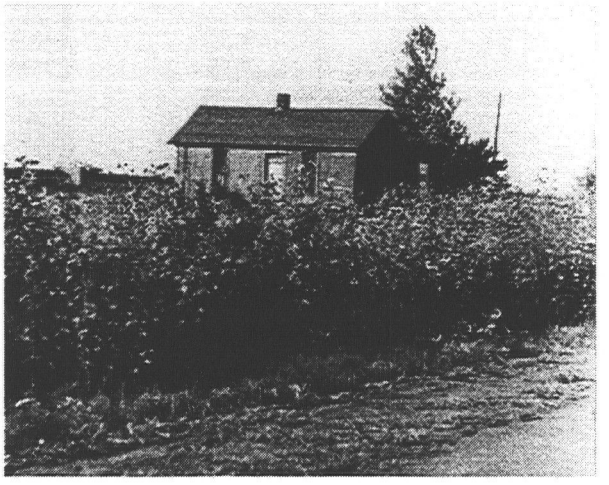


Figure 81.
Cottage, Nicodemus, 1949. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

Agriculture

See figure 82. Farmstead, Nicodemus, 1949.

By the early 1940s, northwestern Kansas had slowly begun to recover from the Great Depression. As a result of poor agricultural harvests during the 1930s, regional farmers began to switch from corn to more drought-resistant crops including wheat, milo, barley and rye. The 1940s and 1950s were considered good crop years, partly due to the increasingly widespread use of fertilizers.[197]

An article in 1950 reported that "the thing that keeps Nicodemus alive today is wheat....Nicodemus would probably be completely deserted today if good wheat crops at good prices in the past ten years [decade of the 1940s] had not come along to give the farmers new hope....Wheat is the principal crop but smart farmers do not depend upon wheat alone for their income. Barley, maize, and corn are planted and lately most farmers raise beef or dairy heads to guarantee an income when the wheat fails."[198]

While the cultivation of wheat provided a reasonable income, it was also a risk that was dependent upon a number of unpredictable factors. As the Rev. Joseph D. Wilson recalled, "wheat farming is more like gambling than anything I know of. I've seen wheat sell for $3 a bushel during Wilson's administration and for 20 cents a bushel during Hoover's administration. I've seen the grasshoppers eat up the wheat and the chinch bugs eat up the corn. You plant wheat in the fall and then you're hoping and praying for ten months that there will be something there to cut come harvest time."[199]

With the predominance of small grains and particularly wheat agriculture, the July harvest period was a time of both urgency and festivity for area farmers. The wheat crop needed to be cut, stacked, threshed, and stored or sold before it was ruined by rain or hail. The beginning of harvest was usually announced in church. Wheat was cut with a horse drawn 'header,' a machine that cut the wheat about three feet from its top. The wheat was then run into a header box and stacked in place, or piled onto a hay rack or wagon to be stacked later. A threshing machine would then come around to each field and finish the process in late summer, usually August. Teams of men would go from farm to farm working to get in the grain. Crews would receive a place to stay and meals from the family whose land they were working. The crew would stay several days until the harvest was complete.

Many men remembered it as an exhilarating time with long, hard days of work and evenings of socializing and recreation. Leland Clark recalled that "harvest used to be an exciting time, but now with the big combines, it's not the same. Everything is cut so fast, and you don't need the big crews. In the past, you might have five crews working—forty-five people—and at the end of the day they'd have supper, sit around, tell stories, 'wrassle.' Now, you cut it, and there's nowhere to put it. When

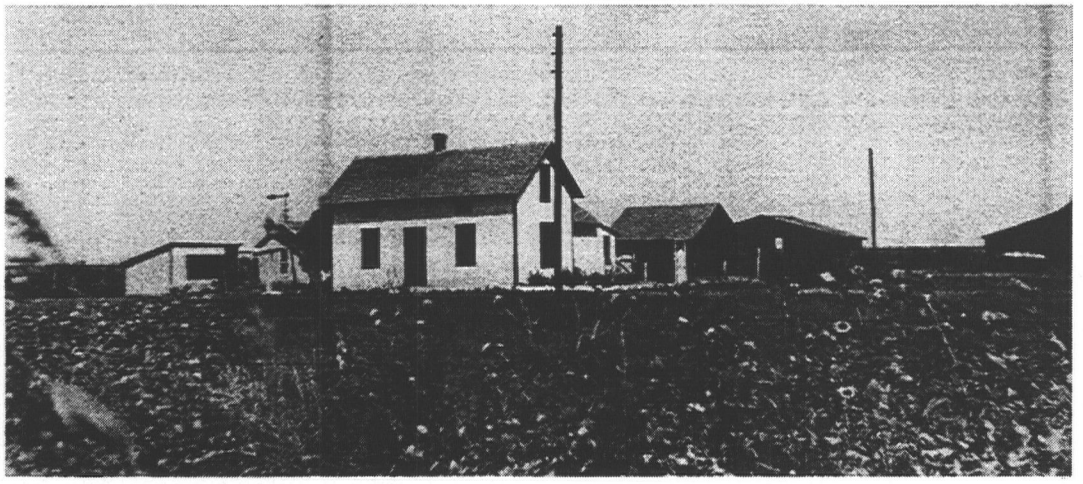


Figure 82. Farmstead, Nicodemus, 1949. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

197 *Ibid.*, 74; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas." Interview with G. Irwin Sayers and Minerva W. R. M. Sayers 1983, 14.
198 "Wheat Town," 27-28.
199 *Ibid.*, 29.

you worked on a team, you'd stay on the farm where you were working, sometimes you'd sleep on the hay rack. ....After dinner, they would play horseshoes, tell stories, play music - fiddle, banjo or something." The annual harvest was such an event that people from the city often came out and witnessed the dramatic spectacle. The informal deadline for finishing harvest activities was August 1, the date for the Nicodemus Emancipation Celebration. As a widespread rural practice, the annual wheat harvest forged a strong sense of identity, place and community for Nicodemus area residents. A similar process would happen in the fall when corn was harvested. A corn sheller would come through the neighborhood and shell the corn.[200]

While much of the corn and wheat was taken to local mills for processing, a few home grown industries also profited from small grain agriculture. Prior to the arrival of electricity in 1950, Henry Wilson had a horse-drawn mill for grinding corn, and hand grinders processed corn and wheat into feed and flour.[201]

Emancipation Celebration

Throughout the 1940s, the carnival companies who brought their rides to the Emancipation Celebration petitioned the Township authorities to move the celebration site from Scruggs's Grove to a more convenient place where trees would not obstruct the erection and operation of the rides. By 1950, American Legion board members finally relented and agreed to move the Celebration site to town and in 1951, the last Celebration was held in the Grove. There was no picnic in 1952, but in 1953 the first Emancipation Celebration was held in town and carnival rides were erected on the vacant lot east of and adjacent to the Township Hall. In explaining why a town of less than fifty residents can attract several hundred African Americans from across the country during the Emancipation Celebration each year, Gene Napue Jr. stated that it was a 'spiritual' process. "Nicodemus, and not only Nicodemus, but also the people in the surrounding counties, are unusual people in an unusual location in America, and it's like salmon swimming upstream to go back to their place of birth. It's just a natural process that they go back and kind of whoop it up two or three days a year for that purpose."[202] At some point during the second half of the twentieth century, the celebration began to be referred to as 'Homecoming,' a name by which it continues to be known today. (*see figure 83. Nicodemus Homecoming announcement, 2000.*)



Registration-Tickets/Buttons-All events for the weekend: $10 Adults, $5 Children (10 yrs and under). Please support us by purchasing your Ticket/Button for the weekend.
KU Medical Van free health screenings Friday & Saturday with Ticket/Button.

Friday July 28, 2000	12:00Noon	Registration/Ticket Sales/Free Refreshments Nicodemus Exhibit/Documentary Film Commemorative T-Shirt & Cozies for Sale
	9:00 PM	Platform - Music by WOWO Road Show
Saturday July 29, 2000	9:00 AM	Registration/Ticket Sales Commemorative T-Shirt & Cozies for Sale
	11:00AM	Parade
	1:00 PM	Program-Welcome-Homecoming Chairman Prayer: Rev. Crawford, Nicodemus First Baptist Church Introduction of the Nicodemus Township Board ***National Park Service Status*** by: Superintendent Steven Linderer
	2:00 PM	Fashion Show: The Senior Women of Nicodemus Descendants Talent Show (all welcome to participate)
	3:30 PM	Descendants/Family Presentations
	4:00 PM	Platform - WOWO Road Show Afternoon Set
	7:00 PM	Gospel Extravaganza; Nicodemus First Baptist Church
	9:00 PM	Platform - Music by WOWO Road Show Youth Dance at tennis court (descendant to DJ for after party)
Sunday July 30, 2000	10:00AM	Nicodemus First Baptist Church Services, Rev. I.G. Crawford Pastor
		Food Vendors Available for Sunday meals.

VENDORSVENDORS**VENDORS**VENDORS**
Sponsored by: Nicodemus Homecoming Committee
More Information (785-421-3311)

Figure 83.
Nicodemus Homecoming announcement, 2000.

[200] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with L'Ray Scott 1996, 204, 208; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Leland Clark 1996, 277; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Orlando P. Napue and Armantha Napue 1996, 334; Interview with Raymond Groves Jr., 5/13/2001, 403. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

[201] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Donald M. Moore and Bertha Moore 1996, 186; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Wanda Adams 1996, 293.

[202] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 75; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with L'Ray Scott 1996, 204; Interview with Gene Napue Sr., 5/11/2001, 386. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

Electricity and Telephones

During the mid-1940s residents of the townsite began to petition the Rural Electrification Association (REA) for service to Nicodemus. On February 1, 1950, the REA provided the first electricity in town to the First Baptist Church. During the late 1940s and early 1950s that the electrical poles and wires first began to appear on the streets of Nicodemus. As Van Shaw recalled, "electricity was just coming in in '49 when we were there, but not very many people felt they could afford the electricity when they got it. The poles were lying about in the weeds." An article published in 1950 reported that Nicodemus contained "no street lights and few of the homes have any electricity....There are no telephones." By the late 1950s, only a few town residents had acquired electrical service. As they eventually received electricity, many residents purchased refrigerators and electric irons. Eventually the arrival of electricity also stimulated interior plumbing and the construction of bathrooms.[203]

Prior to 1950, Nicodemus Township residents had used oil, kerosene, and propane lamps for light, and during the Emancipation Celebration, strings of lights were lit by a generator. The first residents in town to have electric lights were the Bates and Moore families. Alvin Bates was an electrician who used his skill to light his own residence via a wind charger. The wind charger made a lot of noise and during a windstorm it was extremely loud and the lights burned brightly. When electricity came to Nicodemus, Alvin Bates wired most of the houses in the area including the First Baptist Church, the post office, and possibly Township Hall.[204]

By 1950, Nicodemus town residents had signed up for a telephone system and rural service to Nicodemus. Prior to this period, several individuals had experimented with the old 'crank' phones in the 1930s but the closest phone was located in Bogue. The first phones in the Township began arriving in the early 1950s.[205]

Streets and Roads

An article featuring Nicodemus published in 1950 described the streets as "merely wide stretches of dirt road."[206] (*See figures 84., 85., and 86. Street scenes, Nicodemus.*)



Figure 84.
Street scene, 1949. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

[203] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 76; Interview with Dr. and Mrs. Van Shaw, 5/12/2001, 333. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Clarence and Yvonne Sayers, 4/16/2001, 64-65. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; "Wheat Town," 27.

[204] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Donald M. Moore and Bertha Moore 1996, 187; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Clarence Sayers, 1996, 15; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Billie B. Brogden and Robert Brogden, 1996, 299; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Alvena B. Alexander, Billie B. Brogden, and Ada W. Bates, 1996, 306; Interview with Bertha Carter and Nathaniel Moore, 4/18/2001, 129. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

[205] McDaniel, *A History of Nicodemus*, 84; Interview with Clarence and Yvonne Sayers, 4/16/2001, 64. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Freddie and Ivalee Switzer, 4/17/2001, 88. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

[206] "Wheat Town," 27.

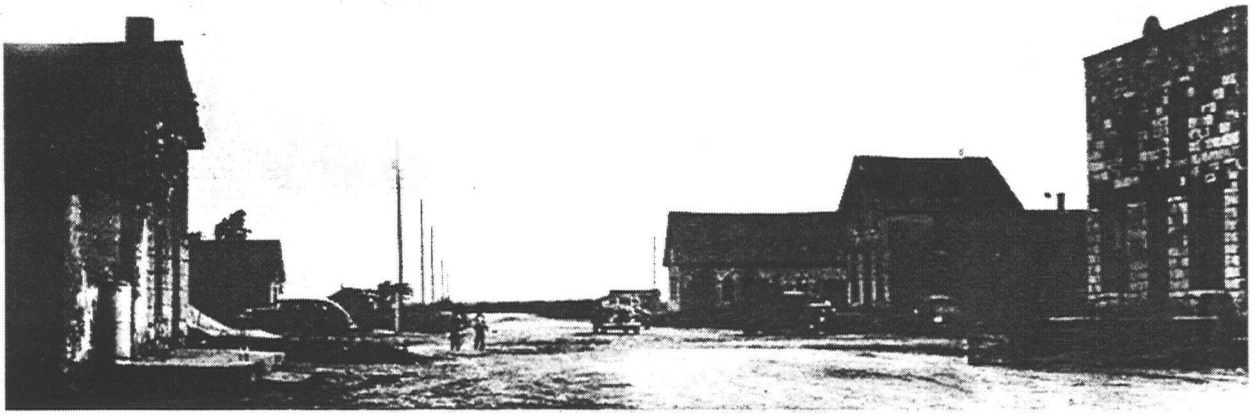


Figure 85.
Washington Avenue looking west, 1950. Note the Masonic Hall, general store, and First Baptist Church on the right, and the electrical poles on the left. (Source: *Ebony*, October 1950.)

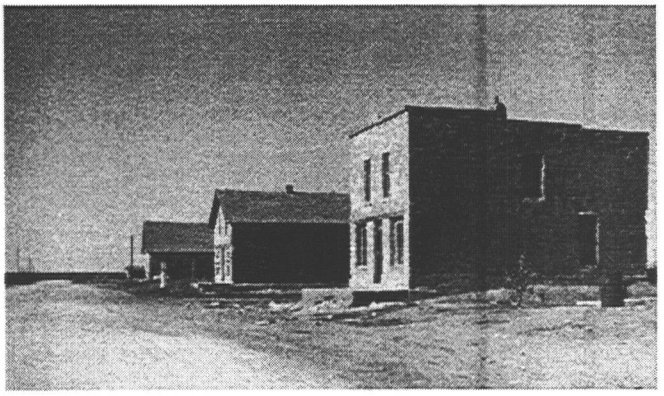


Figure 86.
Washington Avenue looking west, date uncertain. Note the Masonic Hall, general store, and First Baptist Church buildings. (Source: KSHS.)

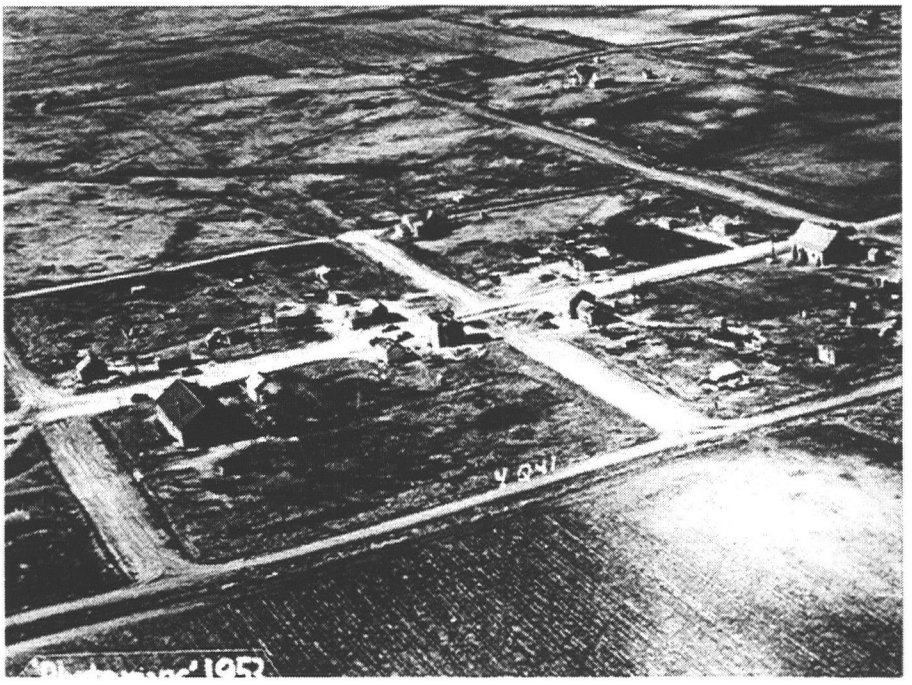


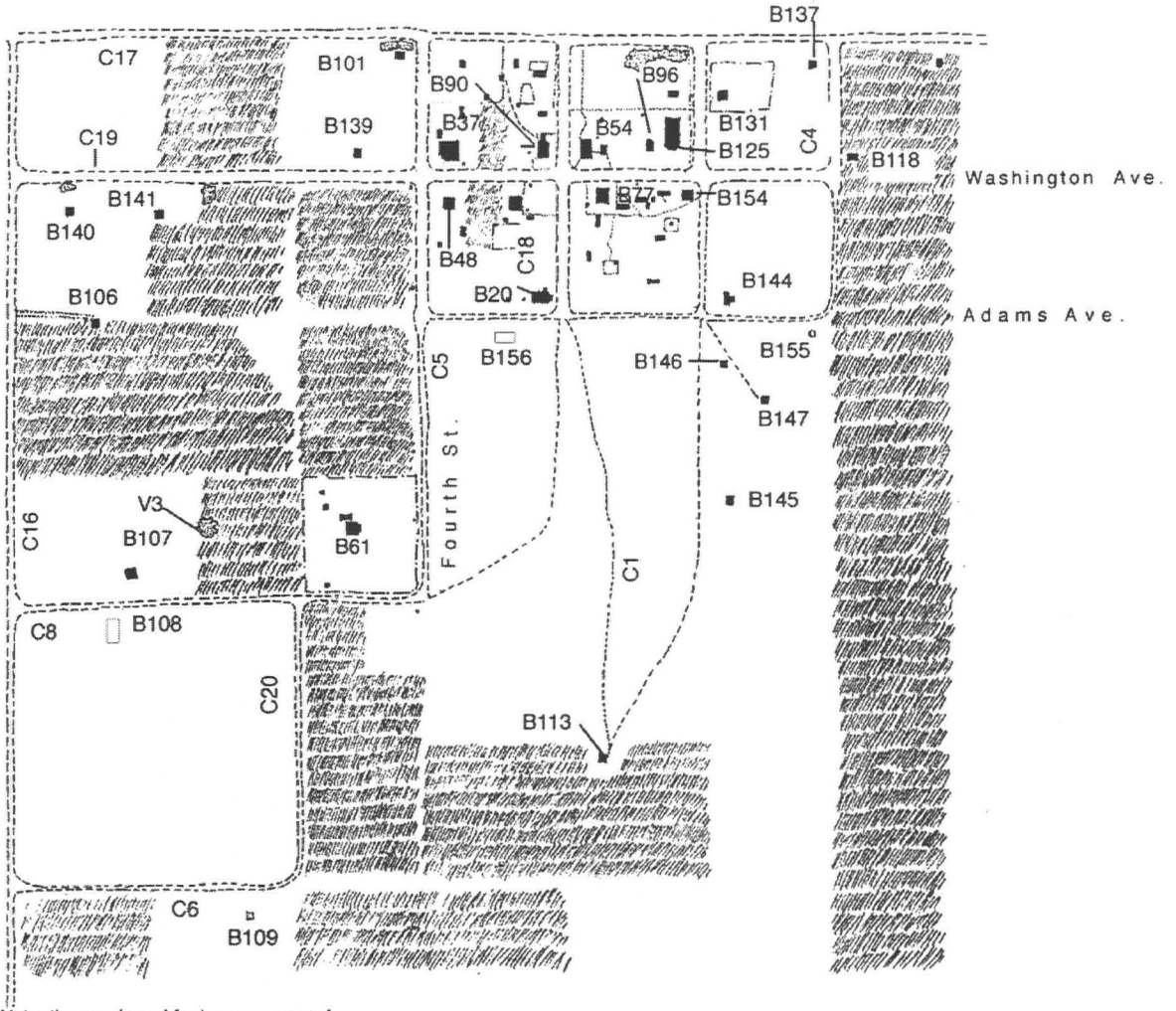
Figure 87.
A 1953 bird's eye perspective of the Nicodemus townsite. Township Hall is the large building to the left. Note the lack of trees. For a similar view, see figure 111. (From *Promised Land on the Solomon*. Source: Bernice Bates.)

The following pages illustrate the landscape features associated with Nicodemus Townsite during the period 1945-1956

Nicodemus as a Social and Cultural Center, 1945–1956

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1945–1956	A.M.E. church, stone		B20	1885
Building/Structure	1945–1956	First Baptist Church		B37	1880
Building/Structure	1945–1956	joint stock store	Williamson	B48	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Masonic Hall		B54	1886
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Nico. Distr. No.1 School		B61	1887
Building/Structure	1945–1956	St. Francis Hotel		B77	1880
Building/Structure	1945–1956	general store	Sayers	B90	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Priscilla Art Club		B96	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Williams	B101	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Napue	B106	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Sayers	B107	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence ruin	Lacey	B108	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence ruin	Rev. Smith	B109	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Vaughn	B113	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	restaurant	Riley	B118	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Blow In Cafe		B121	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Nicodemus Township Hall		B125	1937
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Cracker Box school		B127	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Fairview School		B128	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	First Baptist parsonage		B129	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	granary and pens	Sayers	B130	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Methodist parsonage	Baxter	B131	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	mill	Wilson	B132	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	old AME church ruin		B133	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Post Office	Wilson	B134	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Bronson	B135	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Riley	B136	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Rev. Smith	B137	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Williams	B138	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Robinson	B139	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Napue	B140	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Goins/Robinson	B141	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Bronson	B142	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Switzer	B143	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Scruggs	B144	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Moore	B145	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Sayers	B146	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Moore	B147	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Vaughn	B148	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Lacey	B150	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Scruggs	B151	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence complex	Bates	B152	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence complex	Bates	B153	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence complex	Switzer	B154	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence ruin	Napue	B155	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence ruin	Lacey	B156	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	School No. 33		B157	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	store	Sayers	B158	
Circulation	1945–1956	trails		C1	

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Circulation	1945–1956	Adams Avenue		C3	
Circulation	1945–1956	First Street		C4	
Circulation	1945–1956	Fourth Street		C5	
Circulation	1945–1956	Jackson Avenue		C6	
Circulation	1945–1956	Madison Avenue		C8	
Circulation	1945–1956	roads		C14	
Circulation	1945–1956	Second Street		C15	
Circulation	1945–1956	Seventh Street		C16	
Circulation	1945–1956	South Street		C17	
Circulation	1945–1956	Third Street		C18	
Circulation	1945–1956	Washington Avenue		C19	
Circulation	1945–1956	Fifth Street		C20	
Circulation	1945–1956	Highway 24		C21	
Cultural traditions	1945–1956	Emancipation Celebration/Homecoming		CT1	
Land Use	1945–1956	cemetery		L6	
Small-scale feature	1945–1956	fence		SS1	
Small-scale feature	1945–1956	electric poles and wires		SS2	
Small-scale feature	1945–1956	wind mill	Bates	SS3	
Vegetation	1945–1956	tree cover Mathew Dugout site		V3	pre-sett



Note: the numbered features represent a portion of the total list of landscape features that are catalogued on the following page.

Map Sources

"Aerial view of Nicodemus, Kansas, 1953" (Photograph: Bernice Bates) and "Nicodemus Kansas, Townsite Plan - Circa 1950" by Historic American Building Survey, National Park Service, from Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas. (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1984); "Topographic, Boundary, Feature Survey-Cultural Landscape Report," from survey dated November 11, 1999 by Forgy Surveying.

Legend

- tree cover
- buildings/structures
- ruin-building/structure
- unpaved roads/lanes
- unpaved paths
- fence
- crop cover/fields
- utility poles

North

not to scale

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
CONCEPTUAL PERIOD PLAN
CIRCA 1945–1956

Figure 88.
Historic Period Plan, 1945-1956.

DETERIORATION OF THE PHYSICAL FABRIC OF NICODEMUS, 1956–1972

During the 1960s, the population in Nicodemus Township continued to decrease. As a result, many of the historic structures within Nicodemus deteriorated to a state where they could not be occupied or used. Along the once vibrant Washington Avenue, only the Township Hall, St. Francis Hotel, First Baptist Church and Stewart/Goins house were occupied or used regularly. (*See figures 89., 90., and 91. Street scenes, Nicodemus.*) Despite these conditions, several of Nicodemus Township's elderly residents migrated to the townsite during this period. Some residents moved their homes from surrounding townships into the townsite or improved existing structures. Others who had little means of support outside of Social Security income lived in older houses and were not able to maintain or repair their homes.

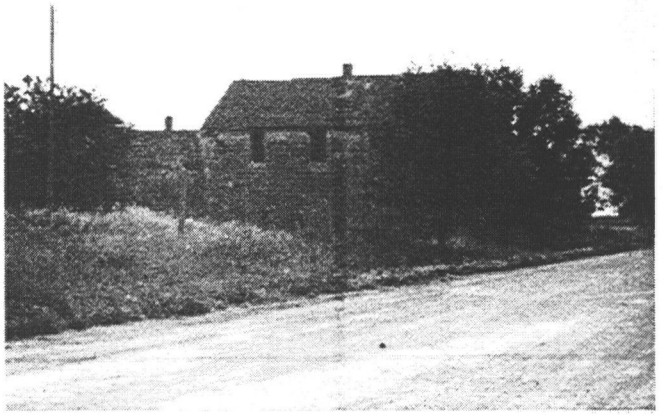


Figure 90.
Washington Avenue, looking east, Nicodemus, ca. 1972. Note general store building on left. (Source: KSHS.)

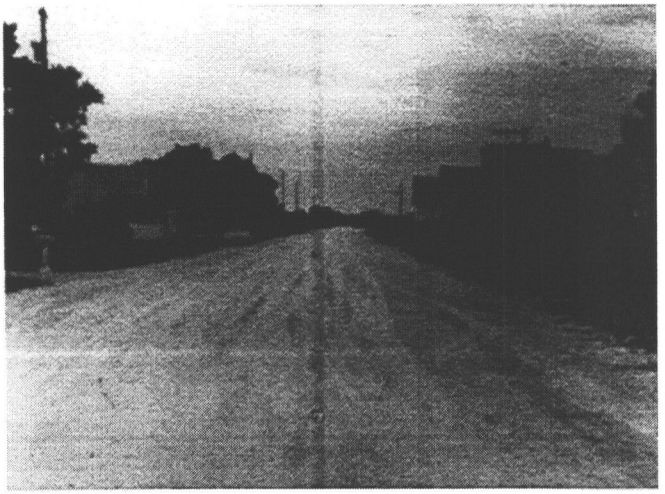


Figure 89.
1964 image of Washington Avenue in Nicodemus looking west. Note the Fletcher-Switzer residence on the left, the Masonic Lodge, general store building, and First Baptist Church on the right. The road remains unpaved. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

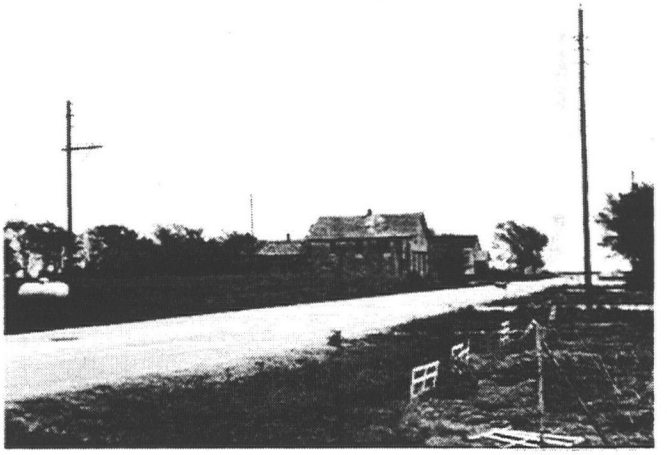


Figure 91.
Washington Avenue looking east, general store building and Township Hall beyond on left, date uncertain. (Source: KSHS.)

Physical Development of Townsite and Township

See figures 92. through 100. Scenes of Nicodemus.

In 1960, the first school established in Graham County, the Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse, was closed due to lack of students. After 1960, Nicodemus Township students traveled to Hill City and Bogue for classes. The District No. 1 Schoolhouse was subsequently used by the 4H Club until 1983 when it was purchased by the Nicodemus American Legion Post.[207]

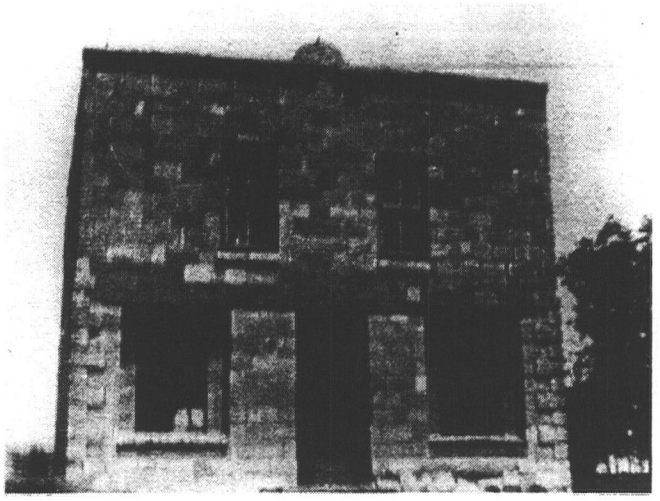


Figure 92.
Masonic Hall, ca. 1964. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

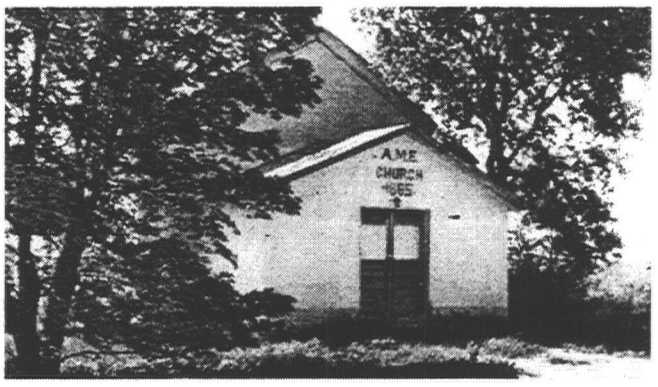


Figure 93.
A.M.E. Church, date uncertain. (Source: KSHS.)

The presence of the new highway and roadside rest area north of and adjacent to Nicodemus provided a convenient access to the region's road system, but it also stimulated some business growth in town. By 1967, Arnetta Nevins purchased the old post office building and moved it north one block to the south side of US Highway 24. After renovating the structure she opened the Nevins Restaurant and gas station in 1968.[208]



Figure 94.
The First Baptist Church and an associated storage structure behind, ca. 1970. The storage structure held batteries and an engine for electricity. Note the sign out front. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

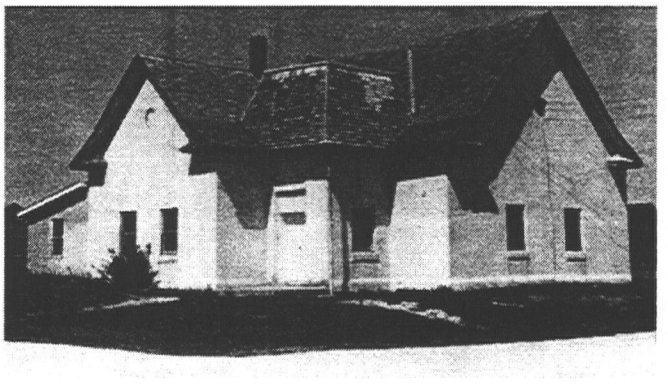


Figure 95.
The First Baptist Church, date uncertain. Note again storage structure to the rear, but the sign is missing. (Source: KSHS.)

[207] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Leland Clark, 1996, 278.

[208] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 77.

Sometime during the 1960s, a new baseball field was constructed in Nicodemus across Fourth Street from the District No. 1 Schoolhouse. This field may have been built to replace the one located at Scruggs's Grove that was eventually lost with the sale of the property in the late 1970s. The ballfield was graded by Leland Clark and a backstop was constructed.[209]

With an increasingly elderly population and fewer adequate houses available for occupation, the town of Nicodemus applied to the Federal Government for assistance. The project was spearheaded by Mrs. Lois Alexander, executive director of the Nicodemus Township Housing Authority. In 1971, a special Act of the Kansas Legislature allowed the unincorporated town of Nicodemus to accept federal funds to build a housing complex for the elderly.[210]

In 1970, the Kansas State Historical Society and the State Highway Commission erected an historical marker commemorating the town of Nicodemus on the corner of Third and South Streets. Due to increasing deterioration, in 1972 the Masonic Hall on the corner of Washington Avenue and Third Street was torn down by Donald Moore. (*See figure 96. Vacant Masonic Hall.*) The upper two stories were taken down with a bulldozer and buried in the basement of the structure. During the same year, a marker commemorating the site and built by Len Schamber and Vernon Van Duvall was placed on the northwest corner of Washington Avenue and Third

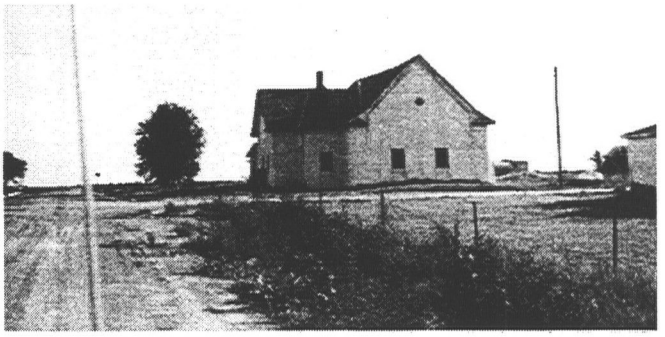


Figure 96.
Side view of the the First Baptist Church, date uncertain. (Source: KSHS.)

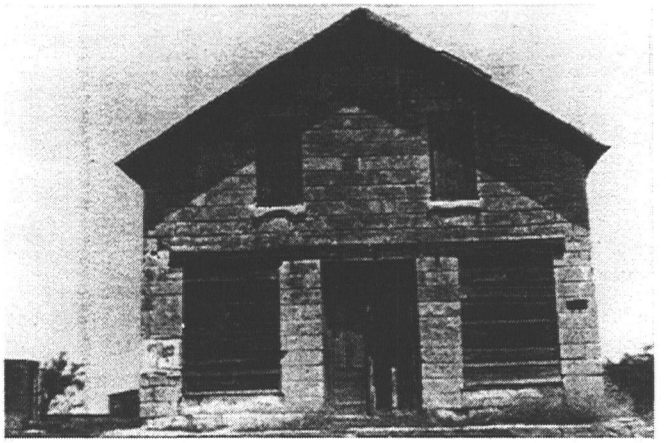


Figure 98.
General store building, no longer in use. (Source: KSHS.)



Figure 97.
Three men outside the general store, ca. 1964. (Source: KSHS.)

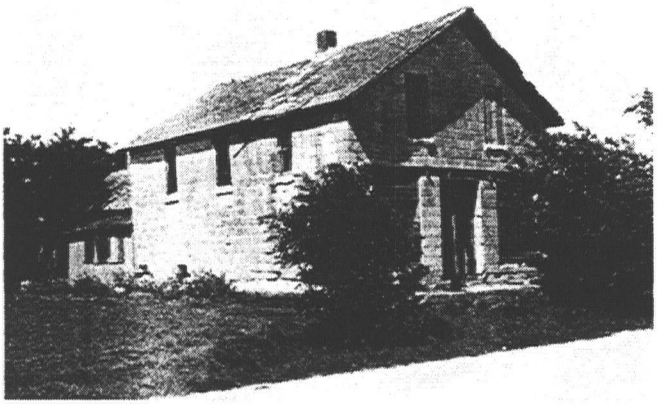


Figure 99.
Side view, general store building. (Source: KSHS.)

[209] Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Leland Clark, 1996, 278.

[210] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 76; "Nicodemus: Little Kansas Town that Refuses to Die." *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, July 3, 1977.

Street. The memorial consists of three limestone blocks, two displaying Masonic symbols, and one a cornerstone with the date '1880,' encased within a brick façade.[211]

Streets and Roads

After the construction of the Webster Reservoir, state authorities decided to move US Highway 24 south three miles adjacent to the northern edge of Nicodemus. The realignment was initiated so that US Highway 24 could pass the dam on its northern side. In May 1958, the *Topeka Capital* announced that Nicodemus was "taking a new lease on life with the relocation of US Highway 24. According to the highway department, the new road will be built along the north edge of the almost deserted hamlet." The town was further described as having dusty roads for streets, no street lights or telephones, with few houses connected to electrical service. Construction of the new route of US Highway 24 took several years and was completed in 1964.[212]

Associated with the move of US Highway 24 and its right of way, in the mid-1960s the state of Kansas was gifted a small parcel north of Township Hall by the Nicodemus Township Board. This parcel of land was designated to be used as a roadside 'rest area.' An asphalt pull-off road was constructed on the south side of US Highway 24, spanning three blocks between First and Fourth Streets. The state of Kansas also placed a shelter, picnic benches and a stone privy in the park. "They [the restrooms] were in an old stone building with a hole in the ground. A great place for snakes!" The Nicodemus Township continued to maintain the property throughout this period. The Kansas Department of Transportation ceded the roadside rest area to Nicodemus Township in 1984.[213]

Planting

Because the maintenance of vegetable gardens and crop fields dominated much of the labor during the growing season, few ornamental flowering plants were cultivated around homes. Those that were noted included zinnias, tulips and roses. Yvonne Sayers recalled that 'in later years' the HDU, "a farm wives unit through the county" planted magnolia bushes. Several Nicodemus women who were members tried planting magnolias, "but the majority of them just had gardens, and it was enough to take care of them."[214]

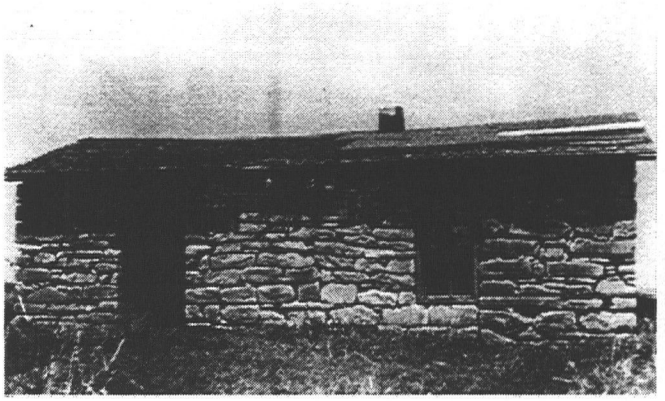


Figure 100.
Frank Riley home, ca. 1964. (Source: KSHS.)

[211] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 78; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates 1983, 10; Interview with Donald Moore, 4/18/2001, 141. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

[212] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates 1983, 24; "Nicodemus' Future Brightens," *Topeka Capital*, May 11, 1958.

[213] Interview with Sharyn Dowdell, 4/21/2001, 232. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Gil Alexander, 4/19/2001, 175. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Felix Revello, Electronic Mail communication, November 17, 2000.

RESETTLEMENT OF NICODEMUS AND DEVELOPMENT AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, 1972–2002

Physical Development of Townsite and Township

See figures 101. through 109. Images of the Nicodemus community.

In 1974, Ernestine Van Duvall moved back to Nicodemus and a year later opened 'Ernestine's Bar-B-Q,' located on the corner of South and First Streets. The restaurant, formerly Phil Van Duvall's home, was moved from the Township west of J.R. Bates's farm into Nicodemus. The restaurant served local community residents but also catered to traffic along US Highway 24. A regional oil boom during the late 1970s and early 1980s aided the few businesses in town during this period. During the oil boom, many companies visited Township residents and acquired leases to drill oil. "There was this craze to drill for oil, and they had leases on a lot of land." While numerous properties outside of the Township were eventually drilled, few in Nicodemus were. "All around! Everywhere but in Nicodemus. And when these oil wells would pump, you could feel the vibrations like sitting here in this house. Not a black with oil!" Ernestine's restaurant closed in 1986 and the building itself was torn down in late 2000.[215]

After the deaths of Mr. Scruggs and his wife, Scruggs's Grove was sold to some 'Frenchmen' [likely of French-Canadian descent] from Damar in 1975. They began to farm the land and subsequently razed the cottonwood grove and planted the fields and pastures in alfalfa.[216]
In 1975, Reverend L.C. Alexander and the First Baptist congregation decided to construct a new First Baptist Church. *(See figure 101. First Baptist Church.)* The nearly seventy-year-old structure was no longer large enough for the congregation and was beginning to show signs of deterioration. With the assistance of church members and volunteer labor, a new brick and frame church was constructed and dedicated just north of the old one in September of 1975. The site for the church was donated by Bernice Jones Sayers. The historic 1907 stone structure was later used as a Fellowship Hall and for social gatherings.[217]



Figure 101.
The storage structure behind the First Baptist Church was removed when a brick addition was constructed. The congregation currently meets in the addition. (Source: National Historic Landmark [NHL] files.)



Figure 102.
Construction of the "Villa," a housing and urban development sponsored retirement community, Nicodemus, 1976. (Source: KSHS.)

[214] Interview with Pearlena Moore, 4/20/2001, 202. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Clarence and Yvonne Sayers, 4/16/2001, 60. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report. HDU may stand for "Home Demonstration Unit," although when asked a number of interviewees could not positively remember.

[215] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 79; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Ernestine W. Van Duvall 1996, 164; Nicodemus Township Board to Steve Linderer, Superintendent, Nicodemus National Historic Site, January 11, 2001; Interview with Angela Bates-Tompkins, 4/20/2001, [216] Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Ernestine Van Duvall, 4/19/2001, 193. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

[216] Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ada and Alvin Bates 1983, 4; Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Charlesetta Bates 1996, 288; Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 79.

After applying to the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the early 1970s, a grant was finally awarded to construct elderly and low-income housing in Nicodemus in 1975. Lois and Earl Alexander were instrumental in bringing the housing to Nicodemus. The site for elderly and low-income housing was donated by Earl and Anita Alexander. In 1976, construction began on five duplex housing units located on the southern half of the block between Fourth and Fifth Streets, north of Washington Avenue. (*See figure 102. The 'Villa' under construction.*) By the end of the year, the housing units, commonly referred to as the 'Villa,' were complete and occupied. Because sufficient funds were not obtained to complete the entire project, the Nicodemus Township Housing Authority applied for and received funds under the Community Development Block Grant program. A year later, a community center, consisting of a hall, kitchen, and office, was constructed adjacent to the five duplex housing units. In addition, minimal street paving adjacent to the Villa was also accomplished in 1976-1977. The first streets to be paved in Nicodemus were Fourth and Fifth Streets, and Washington Avenue surrounding the five housing units.[218] (*See figure 103. Washington Avenue looking east.*)

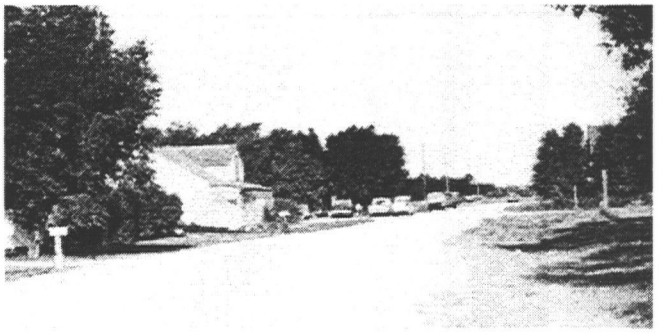


Figure 103.
Washington Avenue looking east. Note the Fletcher-Switzer residence on the left. (Source: KSHS.)

After the construction of the new housing units, the resettlement of Nicodemus continued. During the late 1970s, several more houses and trailers were moved back into town. Other residents began to renovate their



Figure 104.
By the 1980s, the A.M.E. Church had fallen into disrepair. (Source: NHL files.)



Figure 105.
No longer in use, the building quickly deteriorated. (Source: NHL files.)

[217] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 78. Debra Alexander-Wilson, "Cultural Landscape Report, 95% Draft Submission, Review Comments."
[218] Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 78-79; Ms. Carol Alexander to Sherda Williams. Facsimile, January 19, 2001.

existing structures. Many houses received new weather proofing, electrical and plumbing improvements, and by 1976 all structures in Nicodemus had a well or cistern installed on their property. By 1978, the population of Nicodemus had increased to 100 residents.[219]

In 1977, the Bates family acquired the deed to the A.M.E. Church property from the church. The Nicodemus Historical Society held the deed to the property between 1990 and 1993, after which it was returned to the Bates family. In December 1998, the Bates family deeded the property to the Federal Government.

A direct result of the increased population of Nicodemus was the establishment of a Nicodemus Township Community Development Board in 1978. This Board consisted of the Nicodemus Township Housing Authority and members of the Nicodemus Township Board. In the same year, an Economic Development Administration Grant was received to repave the streets surrounding the Villa and construct a fire station, a 100-foot-tall water tower, and municipal water system to serve Nicodemus Township. A municipal garage, fire station, and sewage lagoon were constructed on the west side of Fifth Street between South Street and Washington Avenue. The Nicodemus water tower was constructed just west of Fifth Street, on Block 20 of the original 1877 Nicodemus Town plat. Additional HUD funds were acquired in 1978 to pave the remaining townsite streets and install curbs and gutters. During this construction, the electrical and telephone wires were buried below ground.[220]

Renovation and development of Nicodemus continued into the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1978, the Nicodemus Township Community Development Board received a grant to improve existing housing and other public structures in town. Throughout 1978, Orlando Napue was hired as contractor to remodel and upgrade many of the houses in Nicodemus. Jet pumps and indoor plumbing, toilets and septic tanks were installed, air conditioning units and furnaces were installed where needed, electrical wiring was upgraded, and in some cases general carpentry work and interior and exterior painting was performed. Sidewalks were poured for several houses, and a barbecue was installed for Ernestine Van Duvall's restaurant.[221]

During the same period, Township Hall was completely renovated. Bert Gansel, a Hill City contractor, recalled "we pretty well went through that about twenty years ago. We put a new [drop] ceiling in, new paneling, re-did the floor, and did some work down there in the back end. It's in pretty fair shape....We put in those glass doors because the old doors just went to pieces, and they were put in by Harding Glass of Norton." The Township Hall eventually acquired some theatre seats from an old Hill City movie theatre.[222]

Between 1981 and 1982, funds were received from another Community Development Block Grant that enabled the Township Board to construct Township Park, facilities that included a children's playground, tennis and basketball courts. The Township Park recreational facilities were located west of Nicodemus Township Hall between the Priscilla Art Club and the former location of the Masonic Hall on land donated by Bernie Sayers. Gil Alexander administered the project and Len Schamber put up the playground equipment but



Figure 106.
The Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse ca. 1977. No longer in use as a school, the building was purchased in 1983 by the American Legion and used for meetings. (Source: NHL files.)

219 Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 78-79.

220 *Ibid.*, 79.

221 Michael, "Everyday Life," Interview with Orlando P. Napue and Armantha Napue 1996, 336-337.

222 Interview with Bert Gansel, 4/23/2001, 270-271. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Pearlena Moore, 4/20/2001, 209, Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

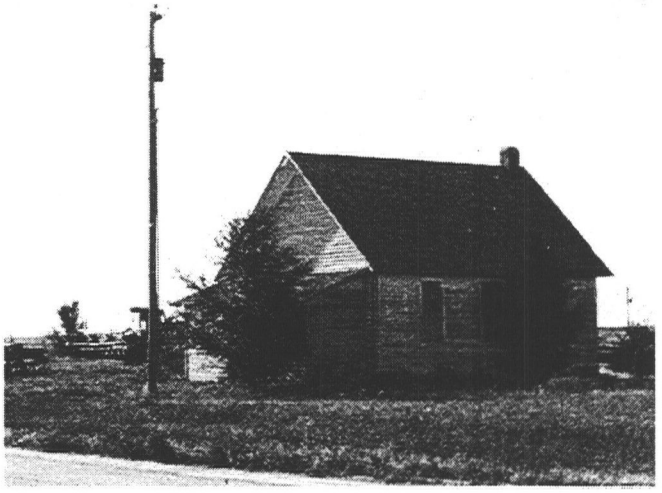


Figure 107.
Residence in Nicodemus, date uncertain. (Source: KSHS.)

had trouble stabilizing it because the upper stories of the Masonic Hall had been pushed into the basement and the ground was not well-packed.[223]

In 1980, the G.M. Sayers general store and gas station was torn down due to deterioration. Part of the stone remains was hauled off by local residents and piled near the schoolhouse. Only two years later, a winter storm severely damaged the Stewart-Goins house, one of the last remaining historic stone structures. By 1983, it too was in ruins.[224]

Sometime during the 1980s, the old Fairview schoolhouse building on Main Street formerly owned by the American Legion was torn down by its new owner, Nate Moore. "Legion had it up here on the corner by Alvina Bates, and they tore it down." In addition, the A.M.E. Church Parsonage was torn down.[225] (*See figure 76. A.M.E. Church parsonage, 1949.*)

Interviews conducted with Nicodemus residents suggest that the remains of some of the townsite's early dugouts and sod-ups could still be seen in the early 1980s. Shallow depressions filled with water, "like pits almost buried in the ground," are all that remain of these former residences. "This town was full of dugouts at one time. Then they called some of them buffalo wallows....Where they are about twenty feet or something like that, that was a home at one time or another."[226]

Because the regional cemeteries continued to be used and maintained by Nicodemus Township residents, the ruins of the Mount Olive Church may have been perceived as a safety hazard. Sometime between 1983 and 1999, the church ruins were torn down and buried on site.

Agriculture

While practiced by fewer individuals, mixed grain farming continued to dominate the Township landscape towards the end of the twentieth century. Commenting on the differences between older and more modern farming practices, Gil Alexander noted that "a lot of the land now is terraced to prevent run off. A lot of the guys are going to more of a 'no-till' operation, which I'm kind of experimenting with. Basically it's treating the ground with chemicals to control the weeds, and planting....like last year's wheat stubble we leave standing to collect whatever snow might blow over it to conserve moisture....and just plant right in there at existing stubble." Modern farming methods aimed at retaining moisture were important to many Township farmers because few used irrigation. "We're dry land farmers....we don't have any irrigation....well there is some irrigation around us, but predominantly this area is dry-land farming." A direct result of the modern farming practices is a decrease in the level of the water in the Solomon. "Even though it looks flat here, there's a grade to the land. ...the land kind of gradually goes down to the river. And terracing holds back the moisture. After a big rain,

223 Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 79; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ordral and Alvena Alexander 1983, 18-19.

224 Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 78-79; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Ordral and Alvena Alexander 1983, 18.

225 Interview with Bertha Carter and Nathaniel Moore, 4/18/2001, 137. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Interview with Dr. and Mrs. Van Shaw, 5/12/2001, 328. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report; Angela Bates-Tompkins, "Review and Comment on 75% Draft [CLR]," 1.

226 Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview #1 with Ora W. Switzer 1983, 6; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Lloyd L. Wellington 1983, 8. A majority of residents who had heard of the term 'buffalo wallow,' described it only as a shallow depression in the grass where water would gather after a rain.

you can just see water standing in the terraces that otherwise would be running to whatever creek, which would run to the river."[227]

Planting

A few farmers took advantage of US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service incentives to plant trees. "They had a cost-share program for windbreaks to protect the house, for one thing, and then also for wildlife and all that. ...If so many trees were bought, the Conservation Service would pay for so many, and the more we bought, the cheaper they were. And, let's see, I put these in around here, my sister put some in around her place, and then those in Nicodemus went in....Just right along the edge of the highway [north and west of the Villa]."[228]

Nicodemus West

Encouraged by the resettlement and development of Nicodemus, in 1977 a group of descendants and former residents residing in Colorado and California decided to invest in the town's future and formed *Nicodemus West, Inc.* The organization had as its goal "to assist in business [and] education, provide scholarships and personal loans, and finance improvement projects." While reunions of Nicodemus descendants and former residents still take place in Western states, the *Nicodemus West* group is not currently active.[229]

Nicodemus Historical Society

In 1989, the Nicodemus Historical Society was established by several community residents including Angela Bates-Tompkins, Twilla Wilson, Vickie Sayers, Rev. Chester Williams, and Earlice Switzer-Rupp to collect and preserve the history and genealogy of Nicodemus, and to preserve the remaining historic architecture. The Historical Society met regularly and published a quarterly newsletter. The Ola Wilson house, donated by Kim and Valerie Thomas, was renovated to house the Historical Society's collections and a museum was opened there in 1996. In 1993, Pioneer Days, an event celebrating black heritage, was revitalized after being inactive for four decades.[230] The Historical Society has also assisted the Nicodemus Homecoming Committee by sponsoring speakers, bar-b-ques, and some educational activities as needed.



Figure 108.
Homecoming parade, Washington Avenue, Nicodemus, 1996. (Source: National Park Service.)

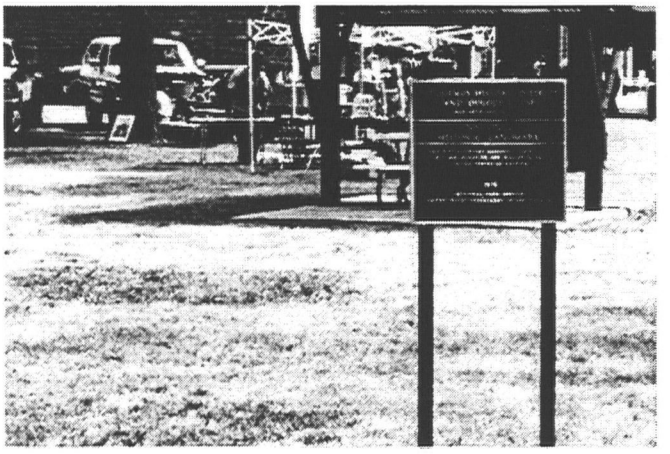


Figure 109.
1976 Landmark plaque set within the Roadside Park with picnic facilities in the background. (Source: OCULUS, 2000.)

227 Interview with Gil Alexander, 4/19/2001, 168, 178. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

228 *Ibid.*, 171. Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

229 Fly, "Into the Twentieth Century," 77.

230 *Nicodemus News Review*, Summer Issue (1996), 3; Debra Alexander-Wilson, "Cultural Landscape Report, 95% Draft Submission, Review Comments."

National Park Service Involvement

During the early 1970s, the Department of the Interior began to show interest in the town of Nicodemus. In 1973, the National Park Service (NPS) was asked by Congress to evaluate the historical significance of the town of Nicodemus. The NPS contracted with the Afro-American Institute for Historic Preservation and Community Development to conduct a study of Nicodemus and several other significant sites. As a direct result of this study, in 1974 the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation filed a nomination form and inventory of cultural resources to establish the Nicodemus Historic District. In January 1976 the Nicodemus Historic District was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL). The Nicodemus Historic District includes the 161.35 acre quarter section representing the Nicodemus townsite. An NHL marker was erected along South Street, north of the Township Hall during this period. (*See figure 109. National Historic Landmark plaque.*)

As directed by Congress, in 1993 the NPS completed a feasibility study of the NHL to determine whether Nicodemus would be a suitable addition to the National Park system. The study found Nicodemus "to be suitable for inclusion to the National Park System."[231]

On November 12, 1996, Congress established the Nicodemus National Historic Site (NHS) composed of five non-contiguous historic properties located within the townsite—the First Baptist Church, Fletcher-Switzer residence (former St. Francis Hotel), former Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse, former A.M.E. Church, and Township Hall. A week later, an NPS curatorial salvage team from the Midwest Regional Office along with a preservation crew from the Southwest Region worked with the property owner to remove artifacts and trash from the A.M.E. Church so emergency stabilization work could be accomplished. In December 1996, stabilization on the structure was performed including shoring up the stone walls, covering a hole in the north side of the building, boarding up the windows and putting on a temporary tin roof. As noted earlier, the Federal Government purchased the historic A.M.E. Church property including the structure from the Double AA-B Family Living Trust on December 21, 1998. Funds for the purchase were donated by the Trust for Public Lands. In 2001, a preservation crew from Ulysses S. Grant NHS performed additional preservation work on the church.[232]

In 1997, an NPS 'arrowhead' sign was placed in the Roadside Park north of the Township Hall.[233] Beginning in June 1998, the NPS began to rent the Township Hall from Nicodemus Township. Use of the District No. 1 Schoolhouse by the American Legion Post ceased in that same year, when an AmeriCorps team, in conjunction with the NPS, initiated general maintenance and stabilization work on the District No. 1 Schoolhouse property. The interior of the Schoolhouse was cleaned out. Lead paint was removed from the exterior of the structure. Clapboard siding was repainted and replaced in some areas. New flashing and shingles were installed over the dormer openings. A new well cover and flagpole rope were also installed. At that time, it was recommended to the American Legion that the electricity be unhooked. The schoolhouse building has been used primarily for storage since 1998.

231 *Nicodemus, Kansas Special Resource Study* (National Park Service, 1993), 23.

232 *Nicodemus News Review*, Summer Issue (1997): 7; Steve Linderer, Electronic Mail Communication, October 9, 2001; Felix Revello to Sherda Williams, Electronic Mail Communication, August 15, 2002.

233 United States, Public Law 104-333 – November 12, 1996. 110 Stat. 4163; Steve Linderer, Electronic Mail Communication, October 9, 2001.



Figure 110.
1999 poster advertising "The Black Wild West: First Annual Cowboy Round Up, A Salute to the Black Cowboy."

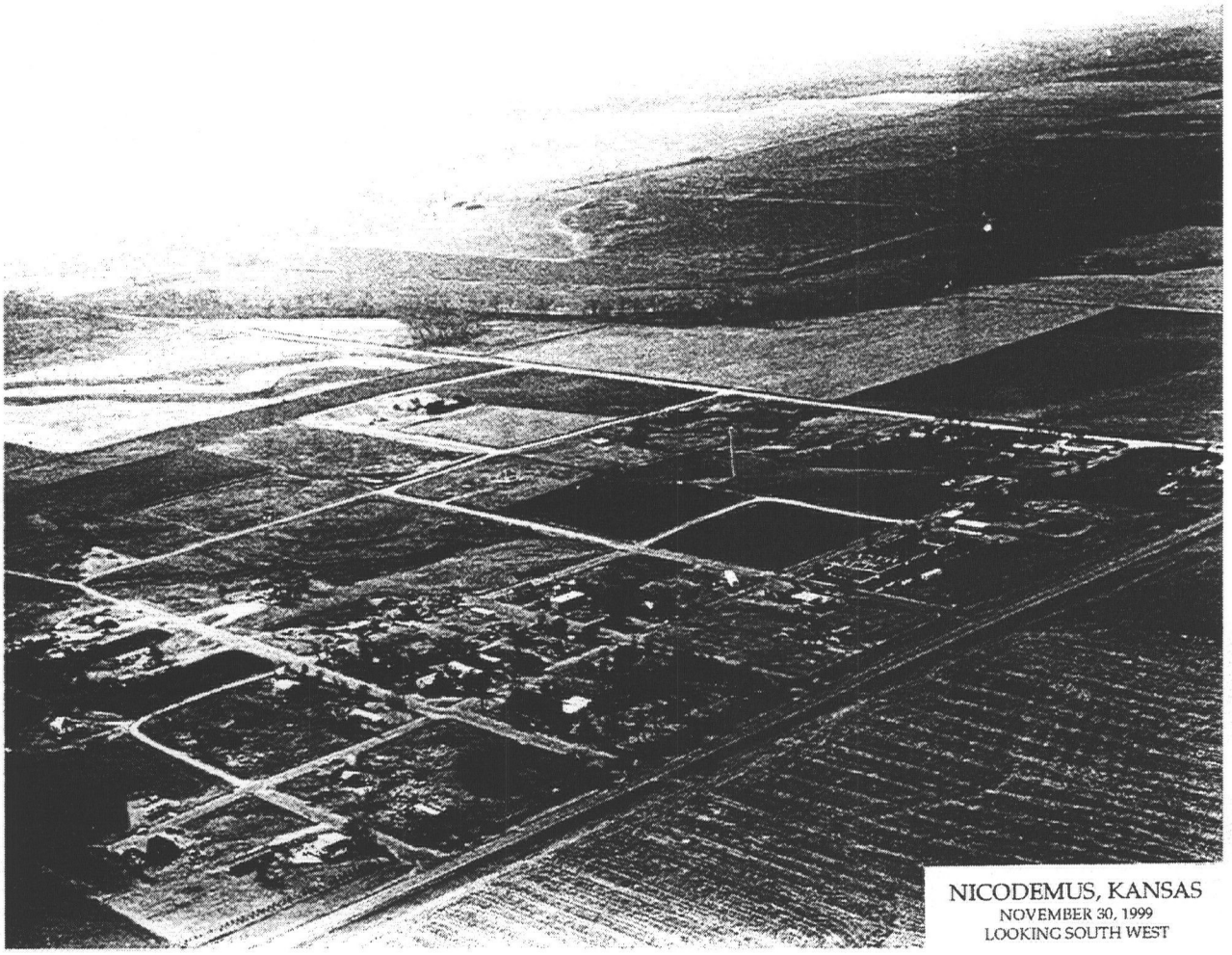
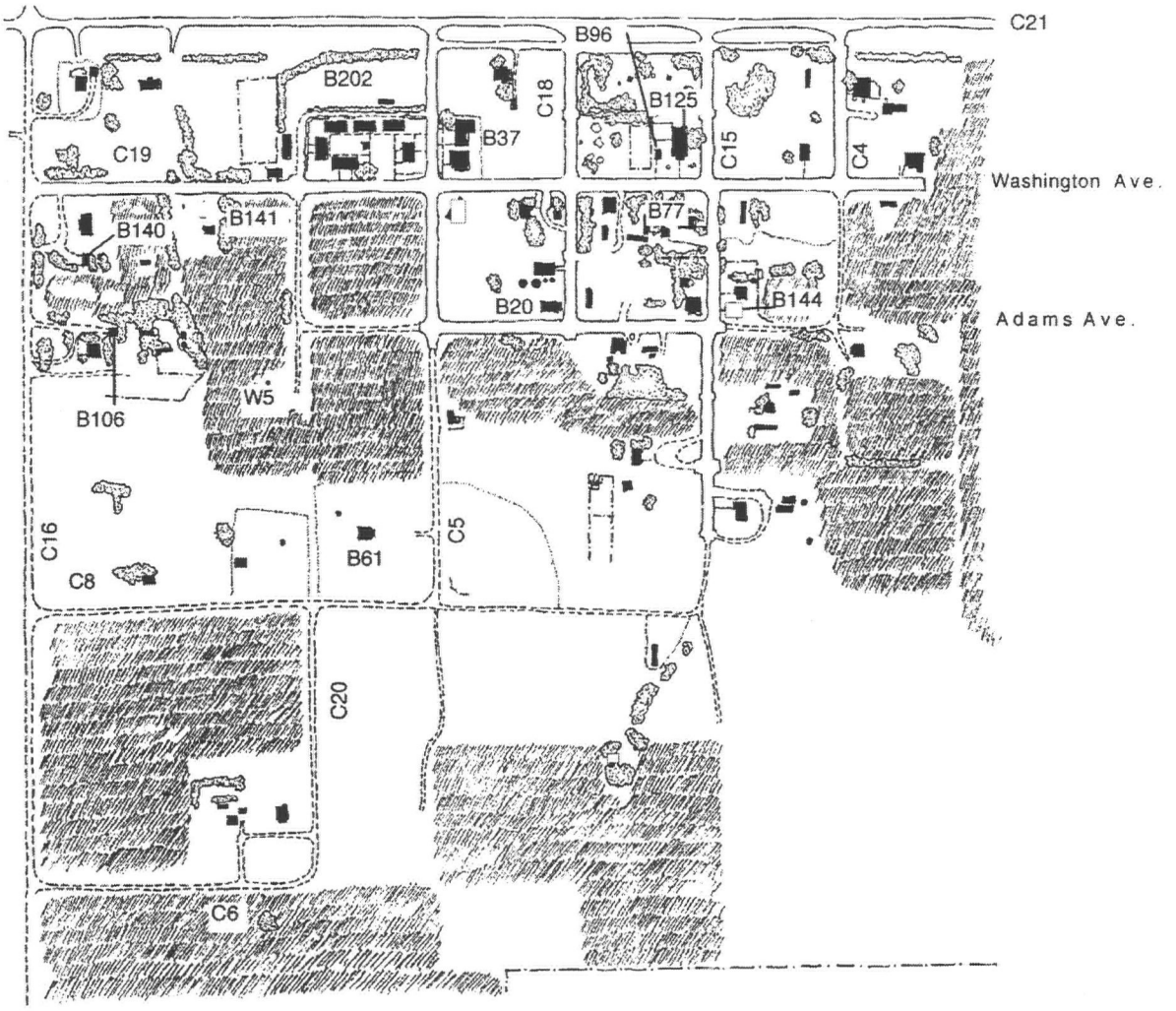


Figure 111.
Aerial view of the townsite, 1999. (Source: Forgy Surveying, 1999.)

Resettlement of Nicodemus and Development as a National Historic Site, 1972–2002

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1972–2002	A.M.E. church, stone		B20	1885
Building/Structure	1972–2002	First Baptist Church		B37	1880
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Nico. Distr. No.1 School		B61	1887
Building/Structure	1972–2002	St. Francis Hotel		B77	1880
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Priscilla Art Club		B96	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Napue	B106	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Sayers	B107	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Vaughn	B113	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Nicodemus Township Hall		B125	1937
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Cracker Box school		B127	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Fairview School/vacant		B128	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	First Baptist Parsonage		B129	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Napue	B140	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence-ruin	Goins/Robinson	B141	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Jerry Scruggs	B144	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Community center at Villa		B161	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Ernestine's Bar-B-Q	VanDuvall	B162	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	fire station		B163	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	municipal fire house		B164	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	municipal garage		B165	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	new First Baptist church		B166	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Robinson	B167	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Bates	B168	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Sayers	B169	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Napue	B171	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Sayers	B172	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Robinson, Sr.	B173	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Robinson	B174	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Burney	B176	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Napue	B177	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Terry	B170	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Wellington	B175	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Wilson	B178	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Stokes	B179	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence duplex	VanDuvall	B180	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Bates	B181	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Switzer	B182	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Alexander	B183	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Moore	B184	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Switzer	B185	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Carter	B186	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Moore	B187	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Redd	B188	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/vacant	Scruggs	B190	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/vacant	Vaughn	B191	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/vacant	Williams	B192	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence-vacant	Williams	B195	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	restaurant-vacant	Nevins	B196	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Stewart-Groins	B197	

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1972–2002	trailer	Grogden	B198	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	trailer	Switzer	B199	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	trailer	Robinson	B200	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	trailer/vacant	Switzer	B201	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Villa (HUD housing)		B202	
Circulation	1972–2002	trails		C1	
Circulation	1972–2002	Adams Avenue		C3	
Circulation	1972–2002	First Street		C4	
Circulation	1972–2002	Fourth Street		C5	
Circulation	1972–2002	Jackson Avenue		C6	
Circulation	1972–2002	Madison Avenue		C8	
Circulation	1972–2002	road		C14	
Circulation	1972–2002	Second Street		C15	
Circulation	1972–2002	Seventh Street		C16	
Circulation	1972–2002	South Street		C17	
Circulation	1972–2002	Third Street		C18	
Circulation	1972–2002	Washington Avenue		C19	
Circulation	1972–2002	sidewalks		C23	
Constr. water feature	1972–2002	water tower		W5	
Constr. water feature	1972–2002	well		W2	
Cultural traditions	1972–2002	Homecoming		CT4	
Land use	1972–2002	agriculture (animals-pasture)		L4	
Land use	1972–2002	agriculture (crops)		L5	
Land use	1972–2002	cemetery		L6	
Land use	1972–2002	baseball field		L9	
Land use	1972–2002	barbeque grill		L17	
Land use	1972–2002	municipal sewage lagoon		L18	
Land use	1972–2002	playground		L19	
Land use	1972–2002	tennis and basketball courts		L20	
Small-scale feature	1972–2002	fence		SS1	
Small-scale feature	1972–2002	NHL marker		SS6	
Small-scale feature	1972–2002	NPS sign		SS7	
Vegetation	1972–2002	tree cover at Mathew Dugout site		V3	pre-sett



Map Sources

"Topographic, Boundary, Feature Survey-Cultural Landscape Report," from survey dated November 11, 1999 by Forgy Surveying.

Note: the numbered features represent a portion of the total list of landscape features that are catalogued on the following page.

Legend

- tree cover
- buildings/structures
- ruin-building/structure
- paved roads
- unpaved roads/lanes
- unpaved paths
- fence
- crop cover/fields

North

not to scale

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
CONCEPTUAL PERIOD PLAN
CIRCA 1972–2002

Figure 112.
Historic Period Plan, 1972-2002.

Chapter 3



EXISTING CONDITIONS DOCUMENTATION

Chapter 3

EXISTING CONDITIONS DOCUMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

The existing conditions documentation of Nicodemus that comprises this chapter describes the project area at three levels. These levels are, from most general to most detailed: 1) Nicodemus Township; 2) Section 1, Township 8 South (8S), Range 21 West (21W), within which the Nicodemus townsite is located; and 3) the five parcels that constitute the Nicodemus National Historic Site (NHS)—the A.M.E. Church; District No. 1 Schoolhouse; First Baptist Church; Fletcher-Switzer residence/St. Francis Hotel; and Township Hall. Documentation of the two publicly held parks that abut the Township Hall property supplements this information.

Because the community of Nicodemus extends beyond the boundaries of Nicodemus Township, this chapter also includes a description of other geographic areas that maintain strong social and physical ties to Nicodemus. The documentation of Nicodemus at all these levels is prefaced by a description of the regional environmental context and setting.

Existing conditions documentation included in this chapter is comprised of descriptive text, representative photographs, and annotated mapping. Photographic station points maps indicate the locations and orientations of the photographs selected to depict the Nicodemus landscape at each level of documentation.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT AND SETTING

As noted previously, Nicodemus is located in Graham County, Kansas, which falls within the sparsely populated northwestern corner of the state approximately 300 miles to the northwest of Kansas City, Missouri, and 300 miles to the southeast of Denver, Colorado. Interstate 70 lies approximately 40 miles to the south of Nicodemus. The closest airport is located along Interstate 70 some 60 miles southeast in Hays, Kansas. More than half of the county's approximately 3,097[1] residents live in the county seat of Hill City; others reside in the small towns and villages of Bogue, St. Peter, Studley, Morland, Penokee, and Nicodemus, or on outlying farmsteads. The predominant land uses within the county are agriculture, including farming and ranching, and natural resource extraction, such as oil, sand, and gravel.

Hunting is a popular recreational activity within the region. The Graham County economic development office web site suggests that Graham County is located in the middle of some of the best upland game habitat in the United States, with over 68,000 acres registered in a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The site notes that these CRP lands, along with natural habitat along rivers and streams, are used to hunt ringneck pheasant, bobwhite quail, turkey, dove, and deer. State designated hunting areas are distributed throughout the county. The Kansas Wildlife and Parks Department administers a program titled 'Walk-In Hunting,' whereby "the state contacts farmers and contracts with them to open part or all of their property to the public for hunting. In return, the state posts the ground and establishes the boundaries for public use ... Farmers are paid a fee for their cooperation and encouraged to plant food plots and to leave portions of their property fallow for nesting habitat."[2] The Graham County economic development department also notes that the county offers outstanding golfing opportunities.

Graham County spans the Smoky Hills and High Plains physiographic provinces within the Rolling Plains and Breaks landform. The Smoky Hills province is characterized by rolling terrain. The High Plains province includes "excellent farmland [that] slopes gently downward from the west. Numerous irrigated fields

[1] Population figures and demographics based on 2000 census data provided by the Graham County clerk's office.

[2] Graham County on-line at http://www.ruraltel.net/gced/recreation.htm.

compensate for the area's limited rainfall."[3] The county generally receives annual average rainfall in the amount of twenty-two inches, which is considered marginal for the production of many crops. Its weather is referred to as "continental," with long cold winters and hot summers separated by relatively short periods of fall- and spring-like weather. The region is frequently subject to strong winds and severe weather events such as hailstorms. Tornadoes also occur sporadically around the area, although less frequently.

Generally speaking, the High Plains region is

> a plateau with broad reaches of flat uplands and poorly developed surface drainage. The major river valleys—mainly the Smoky Hill, Arkansas, and Cimarron—are broad and have gentle side slopes which extend downward to relatively narrow flats. Minor valleys are also present, often in the form of short, steep-sided, narrow canyons leading into the larger river valleys, and numerous shallow depressions or basins of various shapes and sizes can be found scattered throughout the uplands. Overall, however, the landscape is one of 'phenomenal flatness and uniformity.' Geologically, the High Plains consist of Pleistocene-aged loess (wind-blown silt deposits) overlying the sands and gravels of the widespread Ogallala formation. The loess ranges up to 100 ft or more in thickness; nevertheless, it is only a surface veneer in comparison to the massive and much thicker Ogallala formation that underlies it. Because of the loess, surface exposures of the Ogallala are confined to dissected or otherwise eroded areas, mainly along the edges of the major stream courses. In those locations, seeps and springs are common.[4]

Major waterways associated with Graham County include the South Fork Solomon River, the Saline River, and Bow Creek, which generally flow from west to east. These are fed by numerous smaller streams and branches, which generally run from north to south, or from south to north. Water for irrigating crop fields and for watering livestock is secured through damming stream corridors and from wells accessing ground water. The most "promising areas for the development of large supplies of ground water are in the valley of South Fork Solomon River and in the northwestern part of the county."[5]

Many of the local soils are well suited to crop, hay, and forage production. Because of the prevalence of agriculture, soil is generally considered the "most important natural resource in the county."[6] Soil loss from water and wind-generated erosion is a constant management concern, as is conserving moisture and maintaining tilth and fertility. The main agricultural crops, which are grown over approximately 50 percent of the county's area, are wheat, grain sorghum, and forage sorghum or milo. Approximately 39 percent of the county's area is utilized as rangeland for cattle.

Landcover and vegetation patterns form a patchwork of crop fields, grazed lands, fallow fields, and riparian plant communities. Discernible land ownership patterns, including field configurations, fencelines, and public road corridors, clearly reflect the township/range/section lines resulting from the General Land Office survey system which was applied to this part of Kansas during the late 1860s. The system is also occasionally deformed or interrupted by major physiographic and hydrologic conditions, such as the South Fork Solomon River.

Prior to the establishment of Nicodemus and other regional settlement by pioneers of European decent, northwestern Kansas was dominated by shortgrass and mixed-grass prairie communities. As noted by Barry Williams in an archeological survey conducted within Graham County,

> The natural vegetation of the High Plains apparently consisted of a vast expanse of prairie cut through by narrow, discontinuous ribbons of riverine forest. Kuchler (1974) describes the

[3] "1997-1998 Kansas Official State Transportation Map," Kansas Department of Transportation; Bureau of Transportation Planning; Cartography Unit, Topeka, Kansas, 1997.

[4] Barry G. Williams, "Archeological Survey of a CFBA for 24-33 K-4490-01 in Graham County, Kansas," Kansas State Historical Society, October 2, 1992, 1.

[5] Glenn C. Prescott, Jr., "Geology and Ground-Water Resources of Graham County, Kansas," Topeka, KS: University of Kansas Publication, State Geological Survey of Kansas, Bulletin 110, 1955, 37.

[6] Cleveland E. Watts, Donald R. Jantz, and Stanley A. Glaum. *Soil Survey of Graham County, Kansas*. Prepared by U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, in cooperation with the Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986, 2.

potential natural vegetation of the region as including short grass prairie and floodplain forest or savanna. The prairie contained a growth of blue grama and buffalograss along with a few other grasses and forbs. The forbs are most common in the southern part of the state. Riverine areas are described as containing a savanna-like growth of tall, medium tall, and low broadleaf deciduous trees and shrubs, with much of the ground being covered by an impoverished version of bluestem prairie. Dominant tree species listed by Kuchler (1974) include hackberry, cottonwood, willow, and elm, but wild plum, elderberry, and chokecherry were also available (Wedel 1959:10). The trees and shrubs were confined to the floodplains and streambanks, wherever seepage water from permanent or intermittent streams was available.[7]

Many of these indigenous field grasses, such as buffalo grass, blue grama grass, side-oats grama, and wheatgrass, are still found in areas that are not heavily impacted by agriculture—along field margins, in fallow fields, at cemeteries, and within other non-tilled areas. These grasses remain a vegetative component of the region despite pervasive agricultural use of the land. The prominence of specific species in any one location is associated with environmental conditions such as soil type, water availability, grazing, and fire. Trees are scarce within the region due to low average rainfall levels. They are primarily found along stream margins, and in other areas with a relatively constant supply of moisture, or in association with residential complexes where they are watered as necessary.

Sandstone and limestone suitable for construction can be found along the margins of many county waterways. Locally-quarried white magnesia limestone has been used to construct various buildings within the town of Nicodemus and elsewhere within the county due to the ease with which it can be planed or sawed when it is first quarried, and its subsequent hardening with exposure to the air. Sand and gravel used for construction are also mined from low-lying areas associated with local watercourses.

THE COMMUNITY OF NICODEMUS

See figure 113. Diagram, the community of Nicodemus, and figure 114. Sites of cultural importance.

Although this study is intended to focus on Nicodemus Township as the context for the Nicodemus townsite, community ties clearly extend beyond the boundaries of the Township. Numerous residents of the nearby communities of Bogue, Stockton, Damar, Kebar, and Hill City, and farmsteads located beyond the limits of the Township have experiential, emotional, and familial ties to the town. A map illustrating the general geographic limits of this expanded view of the community of Nicodemus is included in this section.

The defining characteristics of the community of Nicodemus relate as much to the common social and political history of a group of people and their familial bonds as they do to landscape and material culture. Even for those who have moved away, Nicodemus remains a 'home place' for descendants and family members, a base that helps to anchor them. Many who choose to leave Nicodemus while raising a family, return in retirement. Events such as Homecoming, and visits by family members living elsewhere to attend reunions, funerals, or spend time during vacations help to renew the bonds and strengthen the emotional and physical connections to the townsite for these descendants. Nicodemus Township and the townsite can and should be viewed as the center or nucleus of a larger Nicodemus community linked with abutting parts of Wild Horse Township and Rooks County. The community of Nicodemus is an assemblage of sub-communities of settlers and their descendants linked together through a common history of enslavement, persecution, relocation, settlement, perseverance, and agricultural heritage. The Nicodemus community is also defined in part by a racial cohesiveness that was once characteristic of many Midwestern towns but is increasingly rare today.

The Nicodemus townsite, like other western towns established during the latter part of the nineteenth century, was an economic hub for settlers homesteading in the surrounding area. Early on, Nicodemus was promoted as a predominantly African-American town. Many of those who were drawn to settle at Nicodemus eventually established farms and homesteads nearby, but not within, the townsite. Early residents participated in

[7] Williams, "Archeological Survey in Graham County, Kansas," 1.

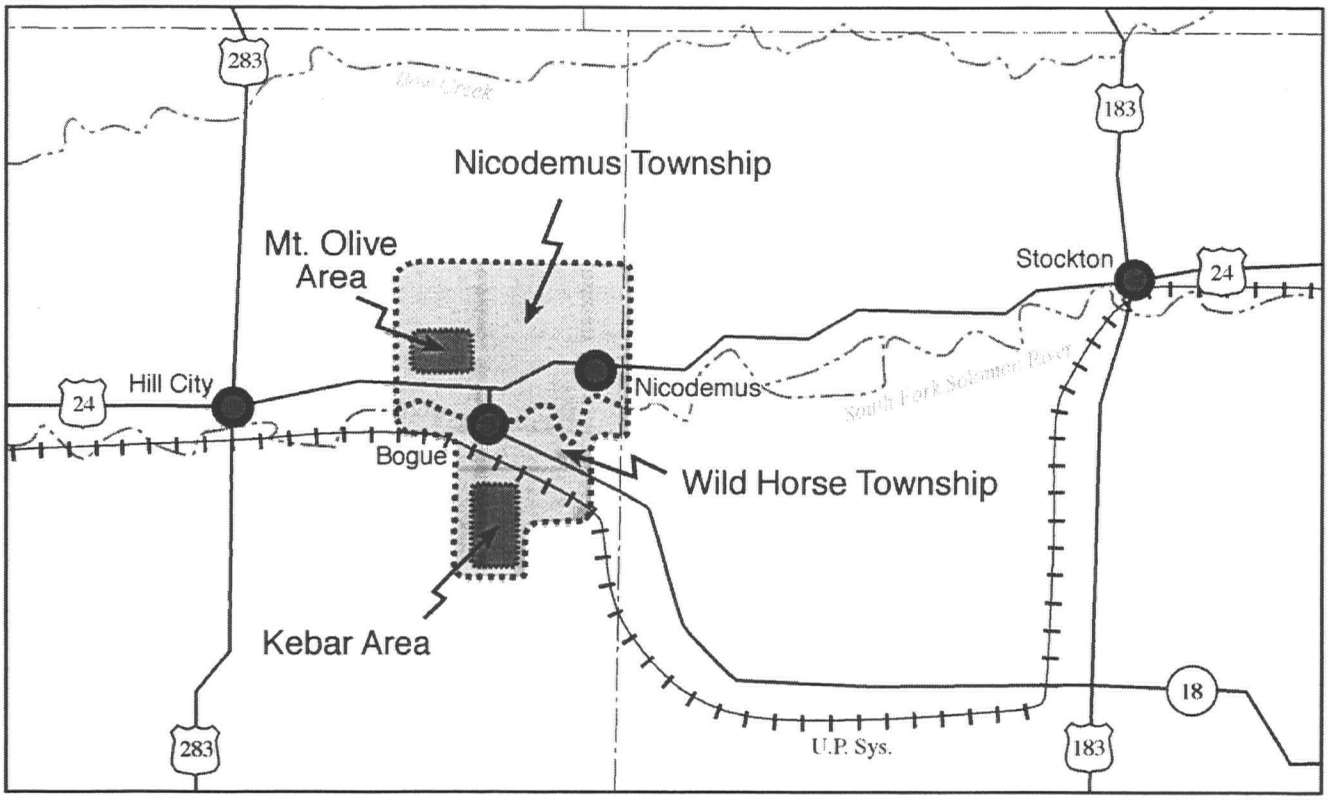


Figure 113.
The community of Nicodemus.

town settlement and homesteading—separate, but related, activities that affected the geographical composition of the community. Nicodemus came to extend outwards into the Township and beyond, with the townsite serving as an iconic, commercial, institutional, and religious center. Smaller satellite centers also grew over time. These included Mount Olive, Fairview, Kebar,[8] Tempe, and Mulberry Grove. Bogue later became another hub of residency for Nicodemus settlers and descendants once the railroad bypassed the community, contributing to an out-migration of many Nicodemus residents and business to the newly formed town with rail access. Other nearby social centers with strong ties to Nicodemus include the towns of Damar and Hill City. These satellites are located in various townships within Graham and Rooks Counties. In addition, other regional sites have played a key role in local cultural traditions, including river baptisms, celebrations in Scruggs's Grove, organized sports in ballfields, and cemeteries. These sites need to be considered in defining the limits of the Nicodemus community. Knowledge of these important sites within and surrounding Nicodemus Township provides a more complete understanding of the complexity of the structure of the Nicodemus community.

[8] Also Keybar.

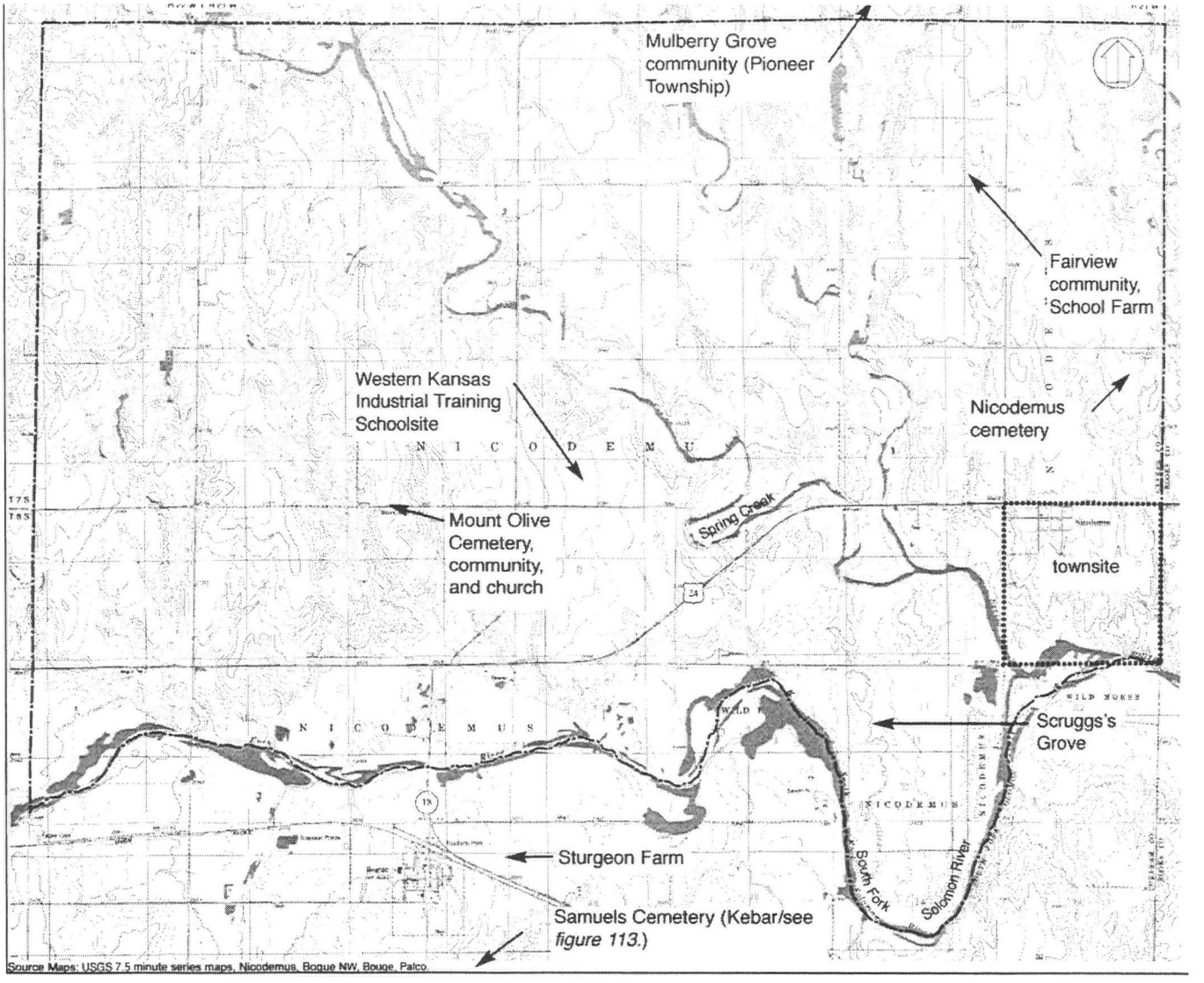


Figure 114.
Sites of cultural importance.

Mount Olive Area of Nicodemus Township

The Mount Olive area, located four miles west of Nicodemus, was a primary destination for settlement by families during the early settlement period, and its development is integral to the story of the community of Nicodemus. Mount Olive was first settled by Rev. Daniel Hickman, co-founder and minister of the Mount Olive Baptist Church, and others who arrived with the initial group of settlers from Kentucky. The satellite community developed its own church, cemetery, and church, which served as important focal points of this community. While the cemetery survives, the church and school are now gone.

Kebar Area of Wild Horse Township

In 1878 and 1879, settlers from parts of eastern Kansas, many of whom were in some way connected to the original Nicodemus settlers from Kentucky, established homesteads in an area south of the South Fork Solomon River that is now part of Wild Horse Township. Settlement there was due in part to limited availability of land in and around the town of Nicodemus after the initial group arrived in 1877.

Lula (Sadler) Craig states in her document, "History of Nicodemus Colony,"

> The last large group of Negro colonists that came to Graham county in 1879 led by John

> Samuels were from Leavenworth, Kansas, and were settled in the Keybar Country by land agents, A.T. Hall and E.P. McCabe. They had come in "prairie schooners" arriving in Nicodemus in April. The company consisted of John Samuels, Sam Garland, Meridee Sadler, Amanuel Napue, their families, Clark Samuels, Henry Hall, and Hiram Travis. It was a short time later that another group came from Leavenworth. Among that company were Swat Atkinson, Lewis Atkinson, William Burleigh, Taylor Turner, Henry Garret, Captain Jiles Green, their families, Henry Blue and Same Truehart. Captain Green located in Rooks County....Other Keybar settlers coming later were Ruedben Kind and Alen Rollins from Ohio, Henry Jones from Missouri, Levi Hobson from Mississippi, Tandy Wilson and Lawrence, his son from Kentucky and their families. Keybar received its name when settlers applied to the government for a post office.[9]

Areas West of the Town of Stockton in Rooks County

The Green family and other African-American families that settled in areas of Rooks County east of Nicodemus and west of the town of Stockton are also linked to the groups that migrated to the region but had to settle further away from Nicodemus due to the lack of available land near Nicodemus.

Town of Bogue in Wild Horse Township

In early 1888, it became clear that the Union Pacific Railroad had decided to bypass Nicodemus when the railroad workers remained to the south of the South Fork Solomon River as they lay tracks for a new line west. By September 1888, the small town of Bogue was platted by the Union Pacific Land Company in the former location of a railroad workers' camp. Once Nicodemus townsite residents realized how bleak their commercial future might be without rail access, a mass exodus from the town took place. Many businesses, both black and white, picked up and moved to Bogue, taking a number of buildings with them. This exodus formed the basis for a satellite community of Nicodemus residents in Bogue, and descendants of these families continue to reside in the area and maintain a sense of affiliation with the town of Nicodemus.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE NICODEMUS TOWNSHIP LANDSCAPE

See figure 115. Detail, aerial photograph of Nicodemus Township; figure 116. Township landcover diagram; figure 117. Township circulation and structural clusters diagram; figure 118. Nicodemus Township hydrology diagram; and figure 119. Base map and photographic station points map, Nicodemus Township.

Nicodemus Township is located in the far east-central portion of Graham County. Graham County is subdivided into thirteen townships, each of which elects a board of officials—Trustee, Treasurer, and Secretary—that develops and submits municipal budgetary needs to the county government. The county levies taxes on behalf of the townships and distributes the money for local municipal needs.[10] There are no incorporated towns within Nicodemus Township. The current population of the Township, according to 2000 census population figures, is 58 residents. The Township falls within the Sixth Principal Meridian of Kansas, and is comprised of the following sections: Sections 24, 25, and 36, Township 7S, Range 22W; Section 1 and a portion of Section 12, Township 8S, Range 22W; Sections 19 through 36, Township 7S, Range 21W; and Sections 1 through 6, portions of Sections 7 through 12, and Section 14, Township 8S, Range 21W.

The Township is bounded to the south by the South Fork Solomon River, and to the north by Pioneer Township. The line between Nicodemus and Pioneer Townships is an orthogonal, east-west trending line that follows a series of section lines. The Township is edged to the east by Rooks County, and a north-south trending line to the east of Sections 24, 25, and 36 within Township 7S, Range 21W, and Section 1, Township 8S, Range 21W. The western boundary of Nicodemus Township also follows a north-south trending line

[9] Lula Craig, "History of Nicodemus Colony." Ms. in Nicodemus Historical Society Collection, Accession # RH MS D250.1. Lawrence, University of Kansas, n.d., n.p.

[10] Graham County was organized from Rooks County ca. 1880. The townships were established soon thereafter. Based on personal communication with various Graham County government personnel, the Township boundaries appear not to have changed since one or two minor modifications were made to the southern boundary during the 1880s.

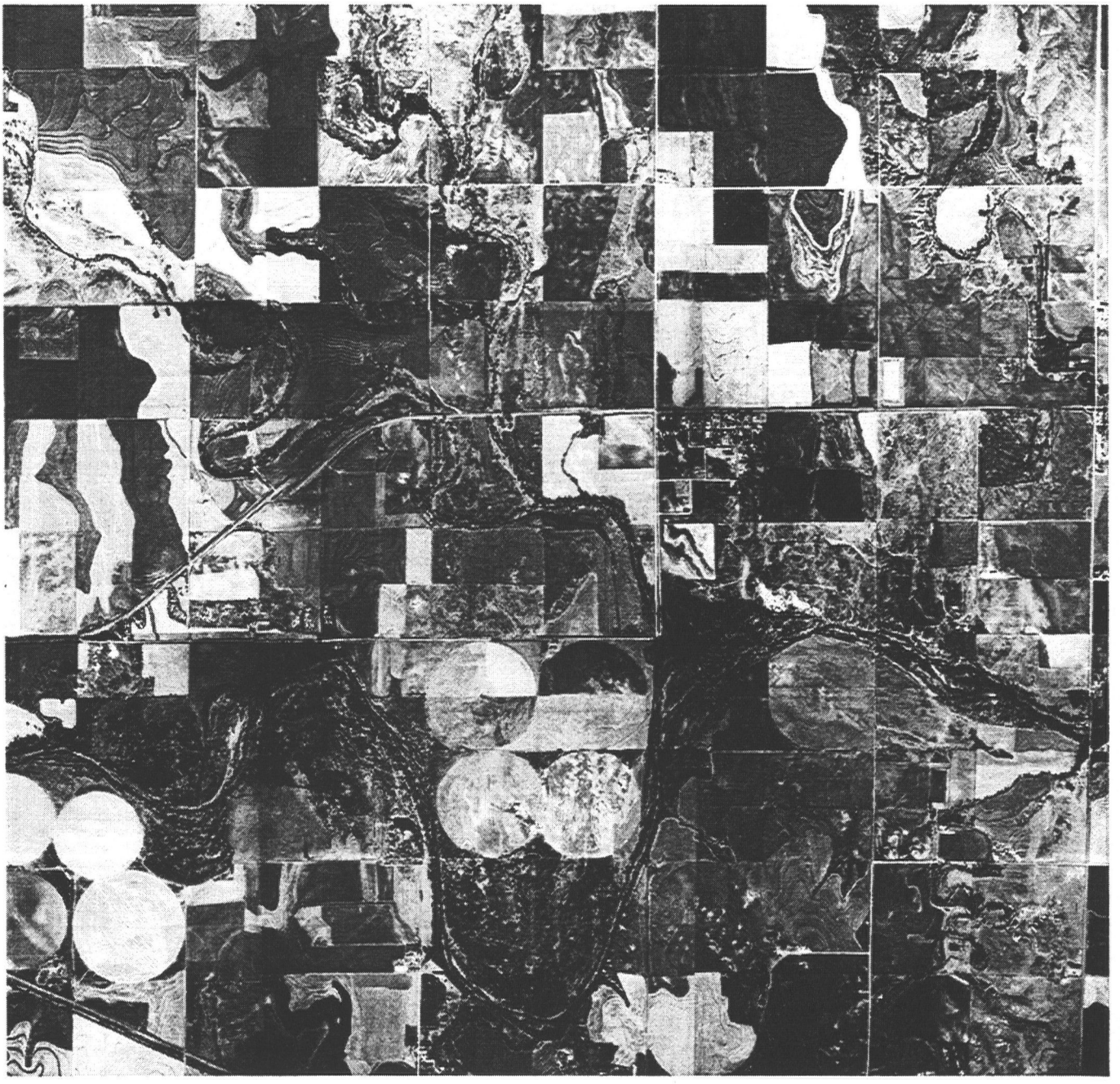
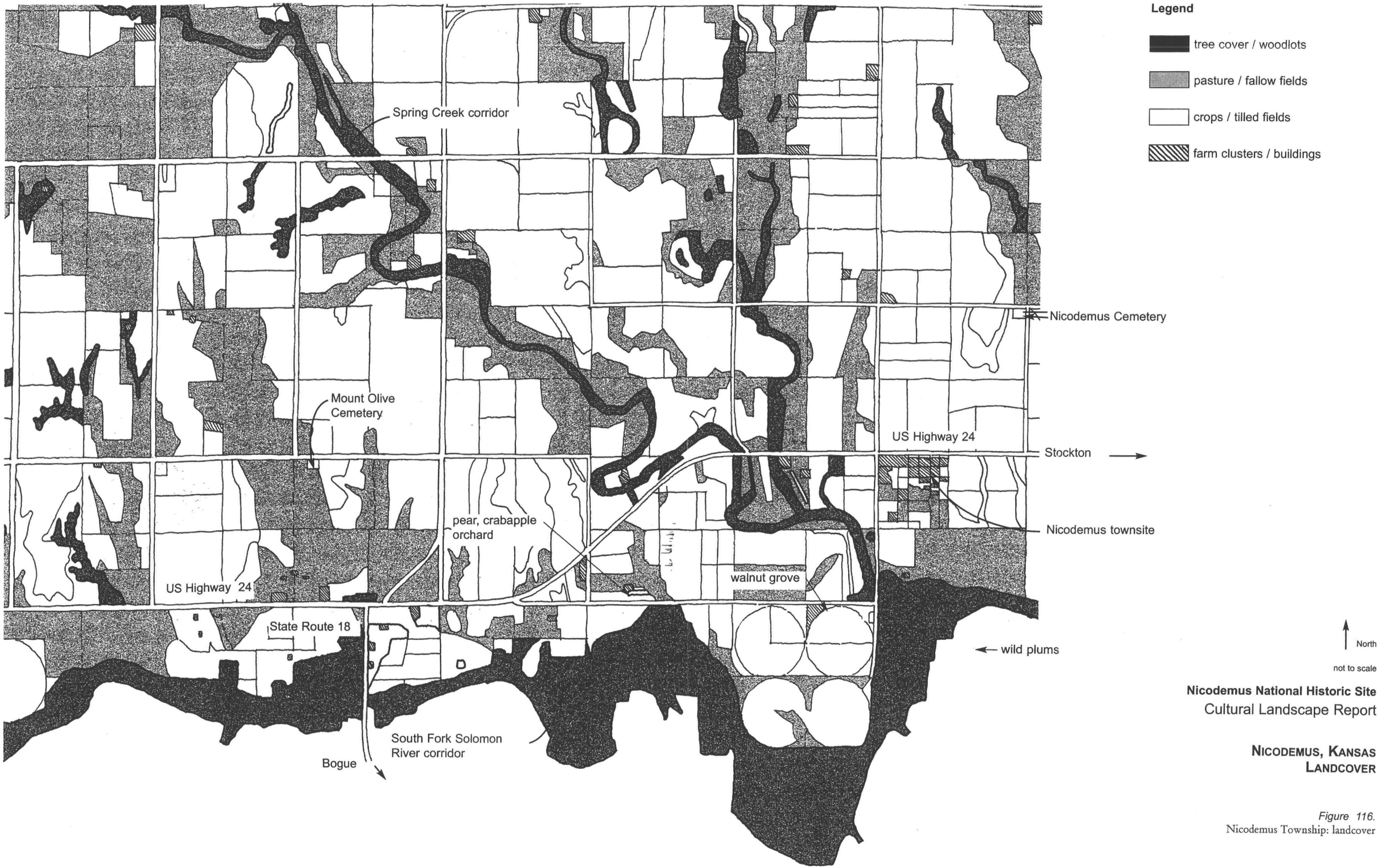


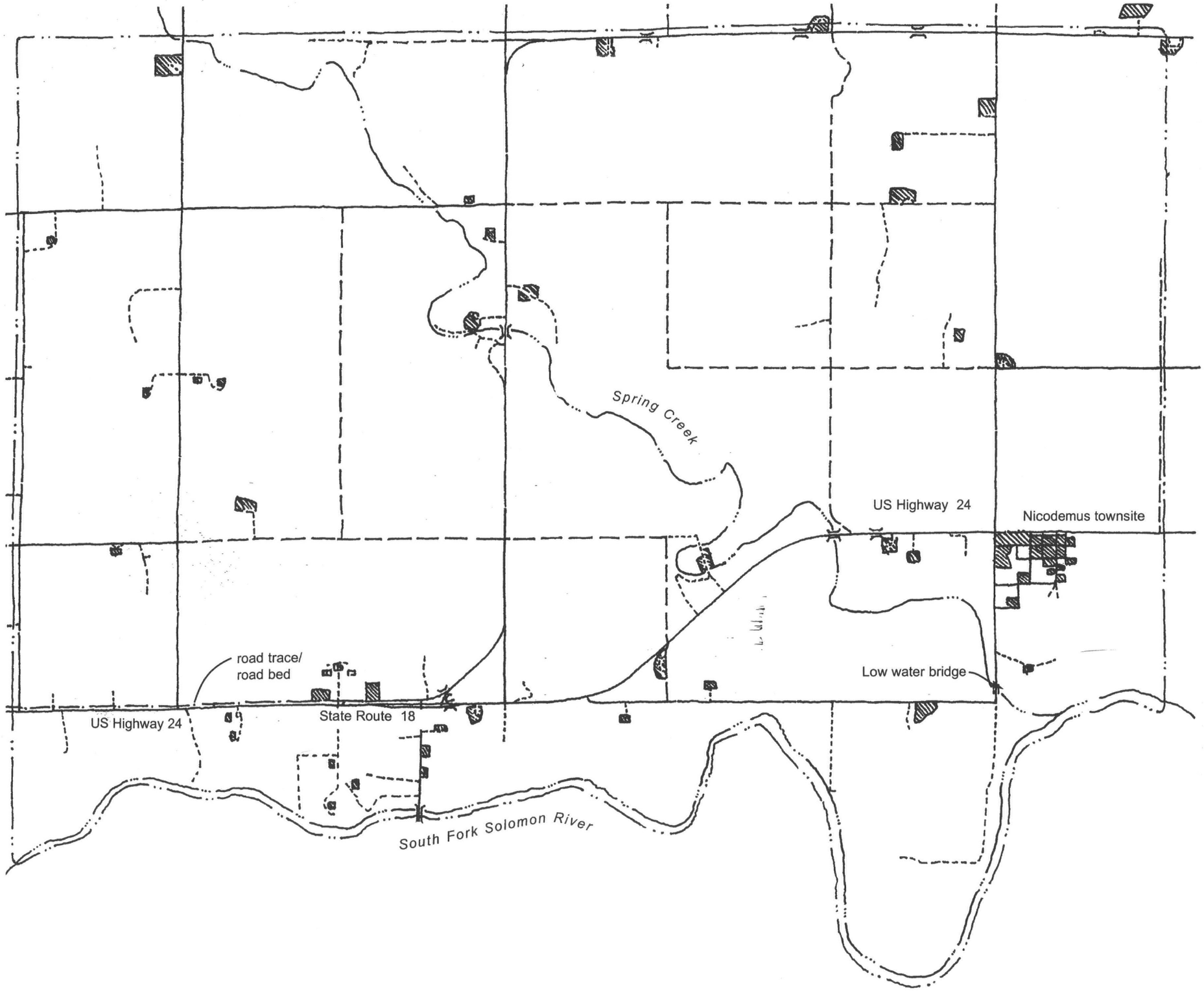
Figure 115.
Detail, 1999 infrared aerial photograph of the southeastern corner of Nicodemus Township. Note the South Fork Solomon River along the bottom of the image, and and the townsite to the right. (Source: Bucher, Willis & Ratcliff Corporation.)



Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
LANDCOVER

Figure 116.
Nicodemus Township: landcover



Legend

- paved roads: asphalt, stone
- soil surface roads
- site access drive / roads
- bridges
- farm clusters / buildings

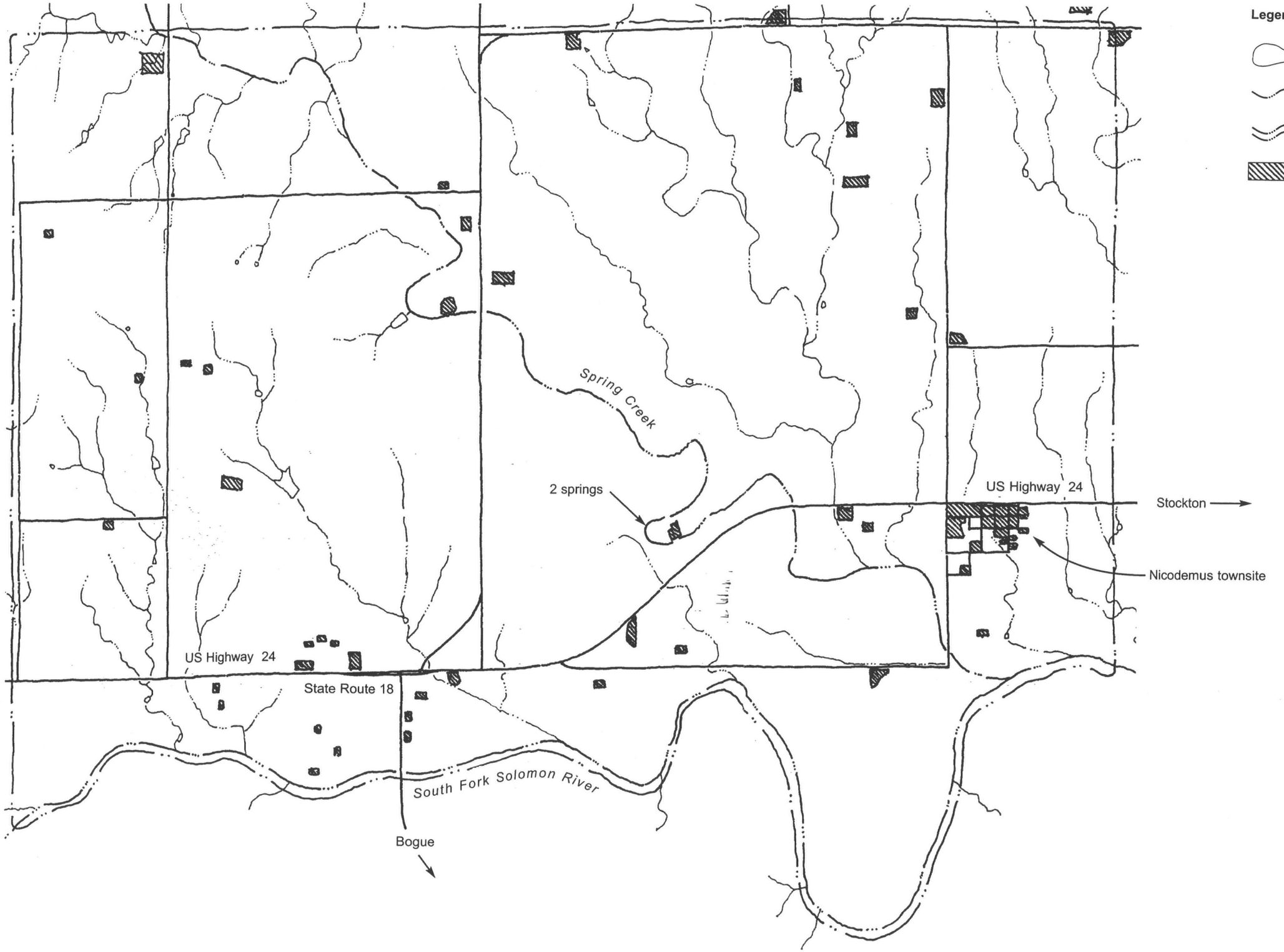
North

not to scale

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
CIRCULATION AND CLUSTERS

Figure 117.
Nicodemus Township: circulation and clusters



Legend

ponds / lakes

drainageway / stream corridor

river corridor

farm clusters / buildings

North

not to scale

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
HYDROLOGY

Figure 118.
Nicodemus Township: hydrology

concurrent with a series of section lines, including Sections 24, 25, and 36 within Township 7S, Range 22W, and Sections 1 and 12 within Township 8S, Range 22W. It is located approximately five and one-half miles to the east of Hill City.

Elevations across the Township range from 1,950 feet above mean sea level along the South Fork Solomon River in the southeast, to 2,250+ feet above mean sea level atop the knolls in the west. Township topography ranges from relatively level to gently rolling. Steeper slopes form the margins of drainage, stream, and river corridors. The central and eastern portions of the Township are more uniformly composed of an upland terrace incised by riparian and drainage corridors, while the western portion is rolling and topographically diverse. Chalky bluffs of wind-deposited material are also present in some locations *(Photo 1)*.

The tops of knolls and plateaus afford long and broad views of the surrounding countryside, particularly since there is little tree cover to obscure views. Towns like

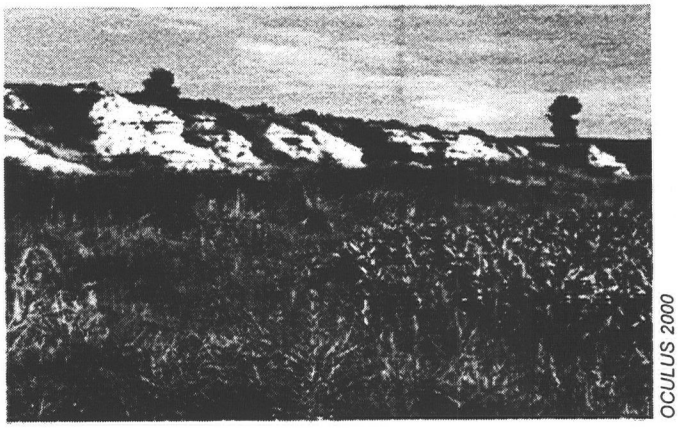


Photo 1.
Chalky bluffs such as these occur to the north of the river along US Highway 24.

Nicodemus and Bogue are especially visible from high points. The buildings and structures of these communities render them visually prominent, set as they are within large expanses of open agricultural fields. Particularly apparent are the vertical columns of municipal water towers *(Photos 2 and 3)*.

In addition to the South Fork Solomon River *(Photo 4)*, the other waterways that traverse the Township include Spring Creek *(Photo 5)*, which empties into the South Fork Solomon River south of the Nicodemus townsite,

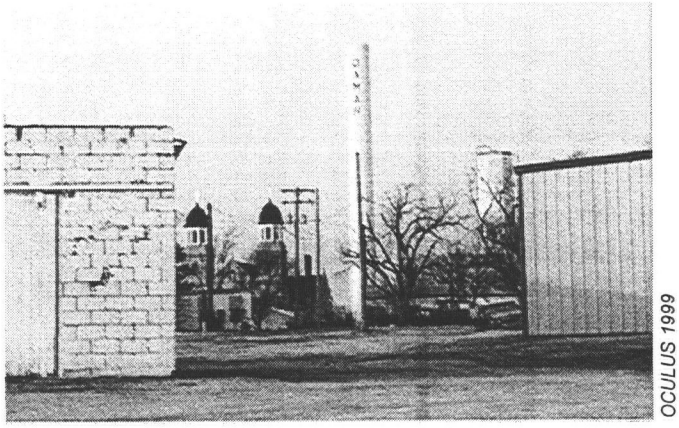


Photo 2.
View of the Damar water tower. Nearby municipal water towers are visible from many locations within Nicodemus Township and serve as locating elements.

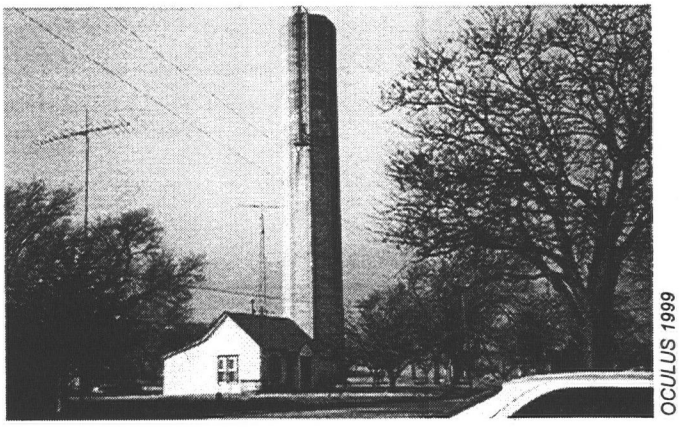


Photo 3.
View of the Bogue water tower.

and various un-named tributaries that empty into either Spring Creek or the river. *(See figure 118. Nicodemus Township hydrology diagram.)* Some former minor tributary drainageways and their associated riparian plant communities appear to have been fragmented or entirely lost through the tilling of soil. No springs were observed during field investigations conducted for this project; however, local residents have indicated that there are at least two known active springs located approximately one and one-half miles west of the townsite along the banks of Spring Creek near US Highway 24.

Tree cover within the Township is extremely sparse due to a combination of low average rainfall and the prevalence of crop farming. The majority of the Township's tree cover is concentrated along drainage,



Photo 4.
View west along the South Fork Solomon River corridor. The majority of the timber within the township occurs along the banks of perennial waterways, such as the river and Spring Creek.



Photo 5.
View of Spring Creek to the west of the Nicodemus townsite.

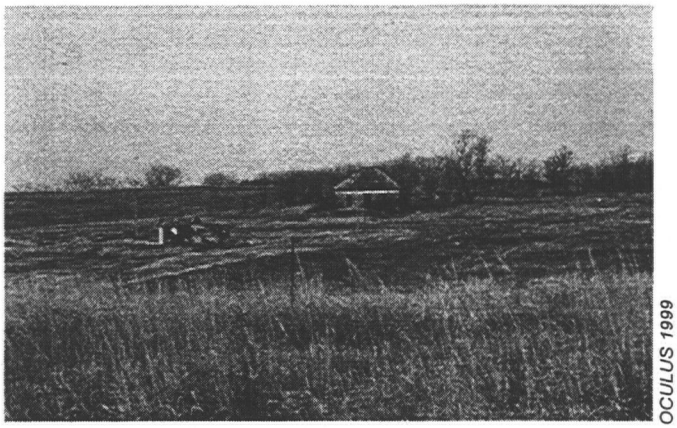


Photo 6.
View toward an abandoned farmstead in the western portion of the Township. Note the tree cover associated with the house site.

stream, and river corridors, and in the vicinity of house and farm complex sites *(Photo 6)*. The dominant tree species along the waterways is Eastern cottonwood *(Photo 7)*. Also prevalent are hackberry, American elm, Eastern redbud, Eastern red cedar, black walnut, willow, sumac, wild plum, and chokecherry. Indigenous prairie grasses that are found along field margins *(Photo 8)*, in fallow fields, at cemeteries, and in other non-tilled areas include big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass, switchgrass, brome grass, grama grass, and buffalograss. Legumes and forbs that are associated with these prairie grasses include wild alfalfa, catclaw, sensitive brier, leadplant, blue wild indigo, cream wild indigo, butterfly milkweed, snow-on-the-mountain, compassplant, buffalo gourd, prickly pear cactus, yucca, purple coneflower, gayfeather, and broomweed. The sole woody invasive alien species



Photo 7.
Most of the trees observed during field investigations for this project were cottonwoods as seen in this photograph taken near Spring Creek. This grove burned in a fire in the late 1990s.



Photo 8.
Agricultural fields, property boundaries, and roads are often edged by uncultivated strips of land where native field grasses and forbs are present.

observed within the Township during this project's limited field investigations was Russian olive. The local agricultural extension agent notes that the most problematic herbaceous weed species that farmers struggle with currently are musk thistle and bindweed. Lespedeza, which is a problem in east and central Kansas, has not made a strong appearance within the county to date. No orchards were observed during field investigations conducted for this project; however, local residents have indicated that there is a walnut grove and crabapple and pear orchard on Veryl Switzer's property, southwest of the Nicodemus townsite near the former location of Scruggs's Grove.

Open agricultural lands variously include cropland *(Photo 9)*, hay fields, and grassy fields for pasturing livestock. *(See figure 116. Township landcover diagram.)* Approximately 35 percent of county farmland is used for pasturing beef cattle. Otherwise, limited quantities of livestock and fowl, primarily raised for personal consumption, include bison, sheep, swine, goats, chickens, turkeys, and ducks. Locally, the dominant crops under cultivation include dry-land grain and forage crops such as sorghum, milo, corn, wheat, sunflowers, and alfalfa. Wheat, formerly a primary crop of the region, has not been grown as abundantly of late due to droughty conditions. Corn has begun to replace wheat. Fescue and warm and cool season field grasses are grown for hay. These grasses, in varying combinations, include big and little bluestem, switchgrass, Indiangrass, grama grass, buffalograss, and some non-natives such as fescue. Legumes, such as alfalfa and clover, are also included in hay field seed mixes. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) supports the transfer of marginal lands from crop production to pastureland and hay fields. The program recommends various mixes to be planted in accordance with local conditions, generally including grama grasses, bluestem, and legumes. While not yet prevalent, there has been an increase locally in no-till farming practices over the past five years. The cost of the associated equipment is prohibitive, and has hindered a larger increase in the implementation of no-till practices. Due to the inaccessibility of the Ogallala Aquifer, irrigation is not typical of the Township. Groundwater for irrigation is available in the vicinity of the South Fork Solomon River, and the primary evidence of irrigation was observed along the river. Current droughty conditions are also causing a shift from wheat to corn production, with a slight increase in pastureland. Water for livestock, however, must be secured through the development of farm ponds. *(Photo 10)*

Roads typically traverse the Township in orthogonal alignments that approximate the grid of the township/range/section system, although they do not always follow the section lines themselves. Public roads occur regularly—almost every mile in both an east-west and north-south direction. They are predominantly surfaced with shale or are formed from hard-packed earth *(Photo 11)*. Concrete culverts *(Photo 12)* and bridges *(Photo 13)* are used to cross streams and intermittent drainageways. Many Township roads are edged by earthen ditches that collect and carry stormwater. *(Photo 14)*. One major arterial road—US Highway 24—traverses the Township. This asphalt-paved two-lane highway generally follows an straight alignment to the north of

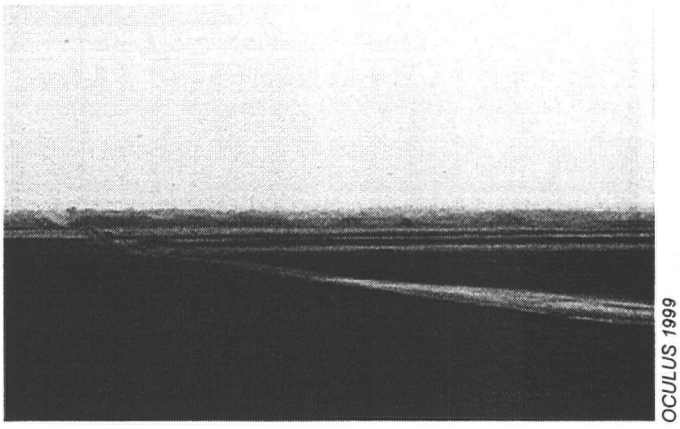


Photo 9.
The predominant land use within the township is agriculture, including crop fields, as seen here near Mount Olive Cemetery, and pastureland. Beef cattle are the primary livestock raised in the Township.

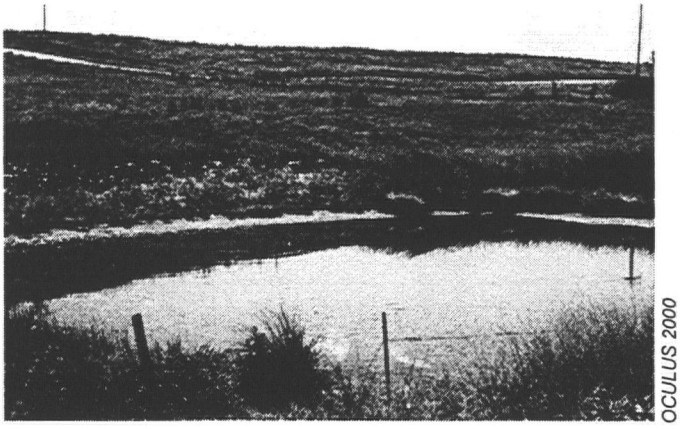


Photo 10.
Stock ponds are found scattered throughout the Township. Many were constructed by damming drainageways in the 1950s in response to devastating floods. The ponds promote infiltration, rather than runoff, of stormwater.

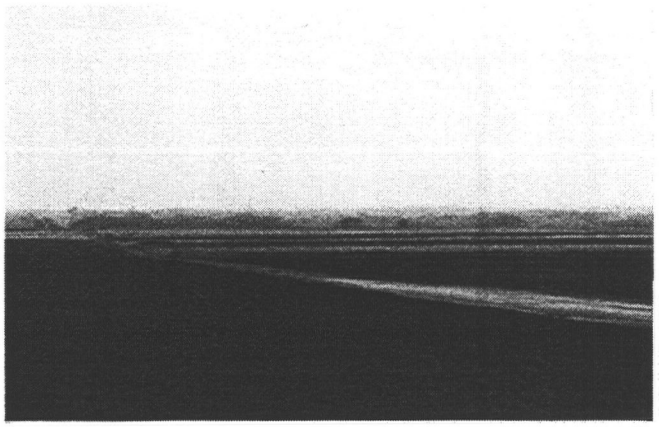


Photo 11.
Roads traverse the Township along many of the section lines. Often, the roads, such as this one located along the western edge of the Township, are composed of hard packed earth topped with shale.

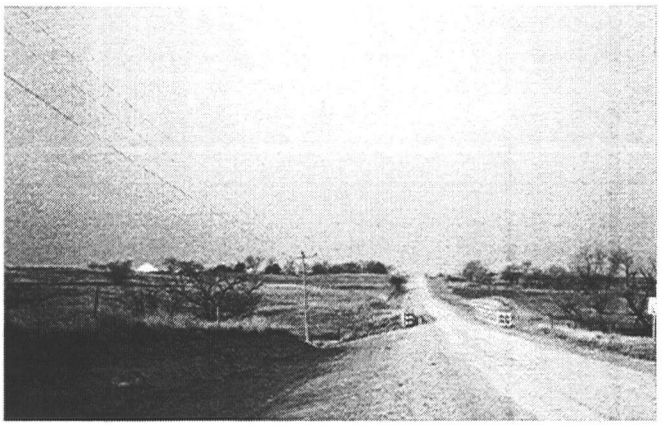


Photo 14.
Some township roads include ditches to carry stormwater. This road edges the Township to the north.

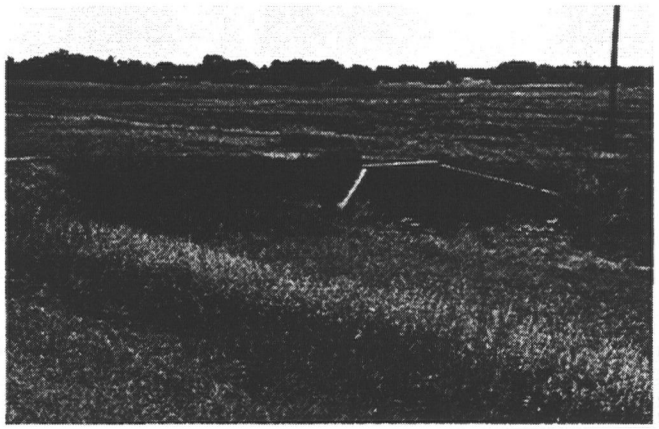


Photo 12.
Township road crossings of perennial and intermittent drainageways include concrete bridges and concrete culverts such as this one located near US Highway 24.

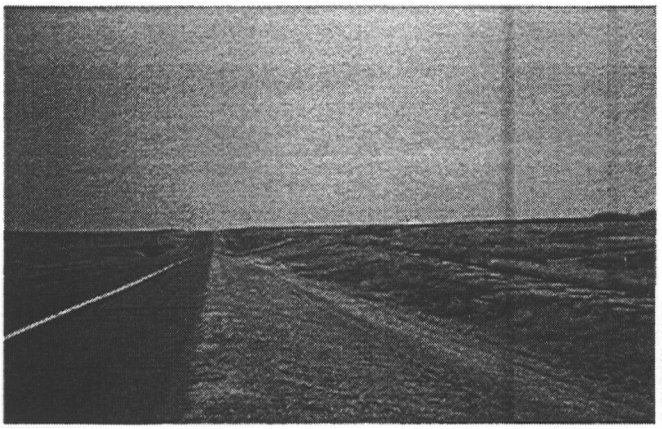


Photo 15.
View west along US Highway 24, which generally travels east/west and leads to Nicodemus. This paved road is edged by a grass-lined ditch system to carry stormwater. Also visible to the right in the photograph is the remains of an earlier alignment of this primary road corridor.



Photo 13.
A concrete bridge crossing of Spring Creek.



Photo 16.
Power line poles edge many Township roads.

the South Fork Solomon River, before curving to the north to provide a connection to Nicodemus *(Photo 15). (See figure 117. Township circulation and structural clusters diagram)* It connects with State Route 18 four miles to the west of Nicodemus. State Route 18 leads south across the South Fork Solomon River, providing a connection with Bogue. Features associated with these major roads include concrete bridge and culverts, metal guard rails, wood post and metal cable guard systems, and grass-lined swales. Barbed wire and metal or wood post fencing, wooden utility poles *(Photo 16)*, and hedgerows or clumps of trees or shrubs *(Photo 17)* edge many of the Township's roadways.

Farmstead clusters, some of which are abandoned, dot the Township. Features associated with these farmsteads typically include dwellings, barns and other outbuildings *(Photos 18 through 22)*, clusters of trees and windbreaks, fencing, cattle guards *(Photo 23)*, windmills *(Photo 24)*, and irrigation equipment. Many Township farmsteads also feature mailboxes *(Photo 25)*, signage relating to property ownership *(Photo 26)*, vegetable and flower gardens, driveways, walks, and satellite dishes.

Non-residential cultural landscape features present within the Township include a radio tower in the northern portion of the Township *(Photo 27)*, oil drilling rigs and storage tanks *(Photo 28)*, an electrical sub-station *(Photo 29)*, and the Mount Olive *(Photo 30)* and Nicodemus

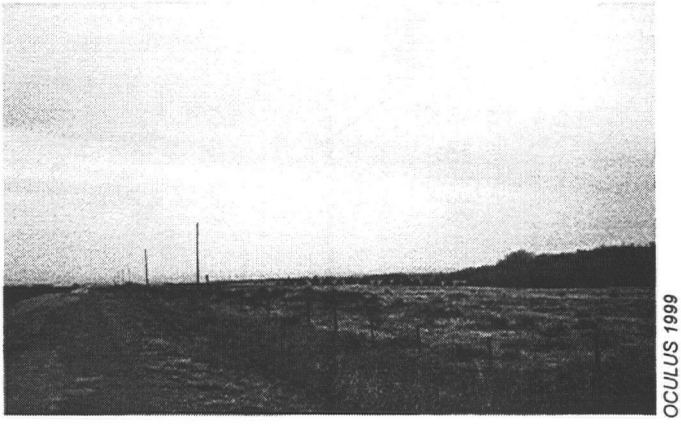

OCULUS 1999

Photo 17.
Property lines adjacent to roadways are typically reinforced by fencelines, as shown, hedgerows or clumps of woody vegetation, and utility poles. This view occurs in the northwestern portion of the Township.

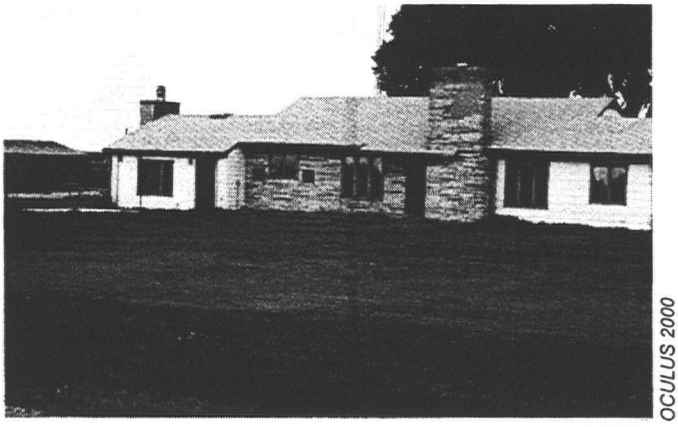

OCULUS 2000

Photo 19.
The styles of Township residences vary. Many, like this one, are associated with agricultural outbuildings.

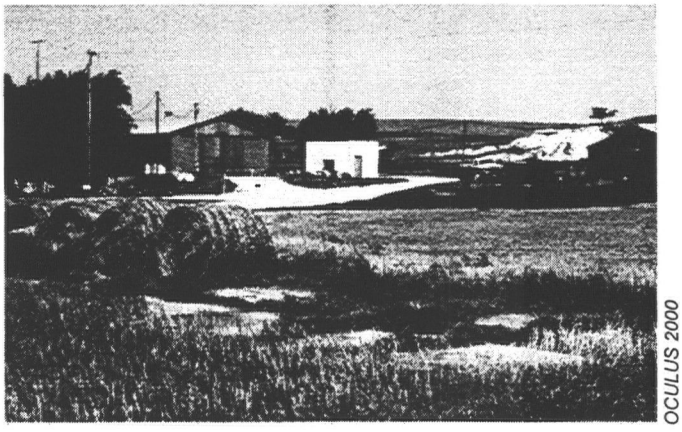

OCULUS 2000

Photo 18.
There are numerous buildings and structures such as these within the Township relating to agricultural and residential land uses.


OCULUS 2000

Photo 20.
This dense cluster of residential and agricultural buildings is located along State Route 18 north of the bridge over the river.

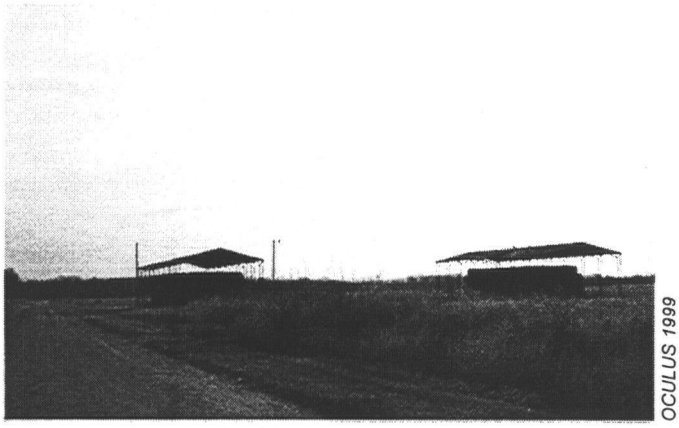


Photo 21.
Agricultural outbuildings, such as these large hay shelters observed southwest of Spring Creek, dot the Township landscape.

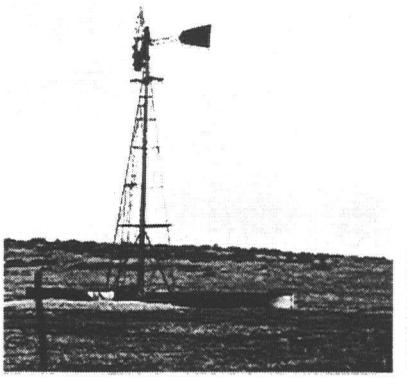


Photo 24.
Windmills are often used in the Township to power well pumps that provide water for livestock.

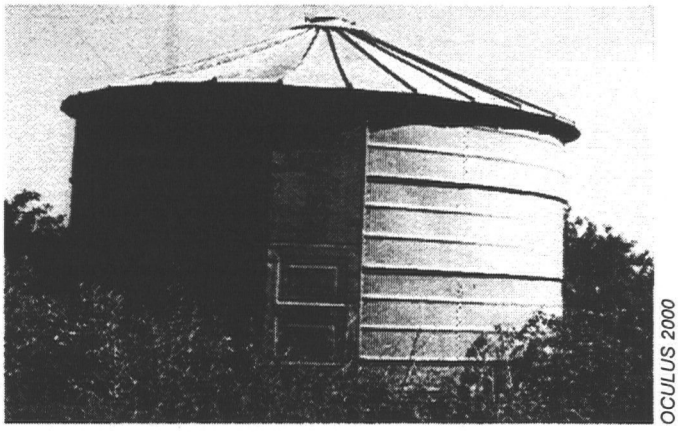


Photo 22.
An agricultural grain bin along one of the Township roads.

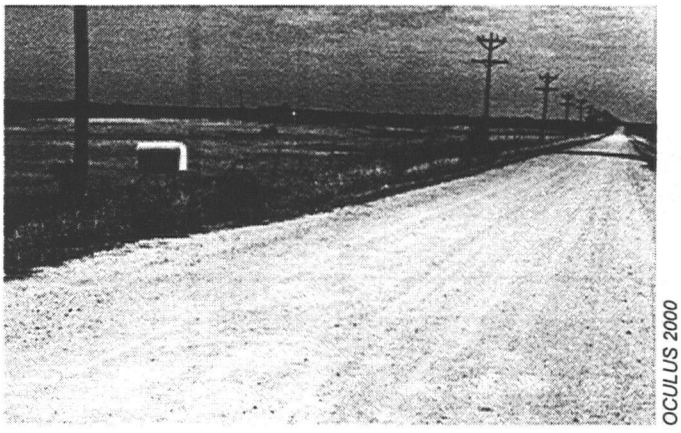


Photo 25.
Mailbox along a Township roadway.

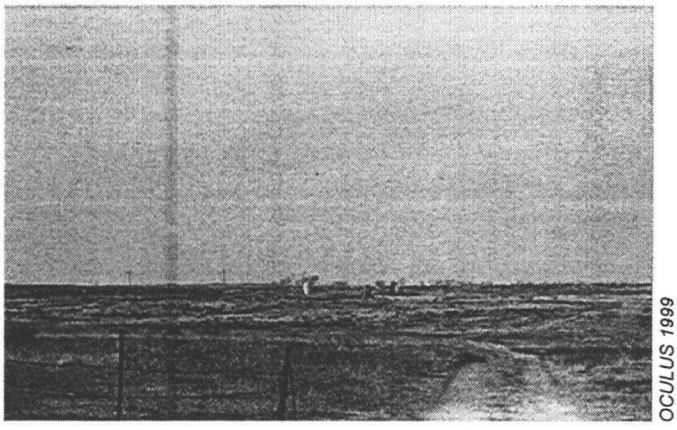


Photo 23.
Cattle guards often mark breaks in fencing systems where access roads and driveways occur.

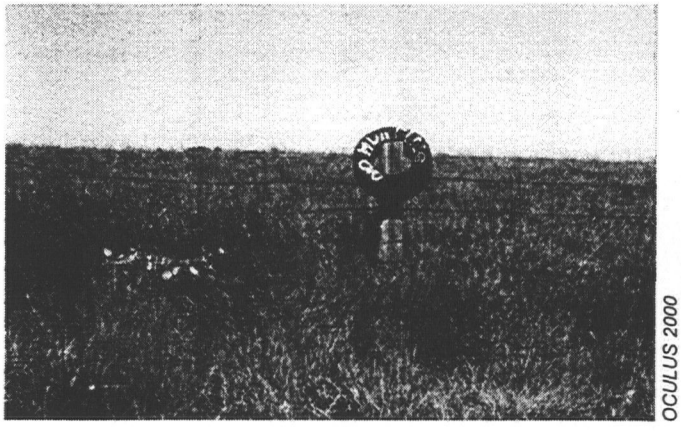


Photo 26.
This painted tire sign along a property boundary indicates that the owner does not allow hunting.

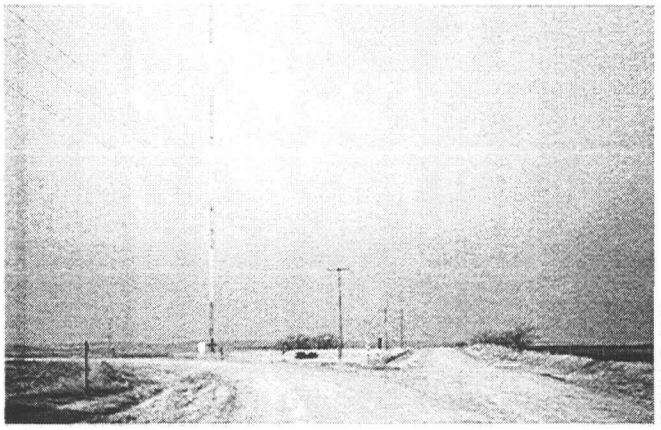


Photo 27.
This radio tower is located at the intersection of two roads in the north-central portion of the Township.



Photo 30.
View south toward Mount Olive Cemetery.

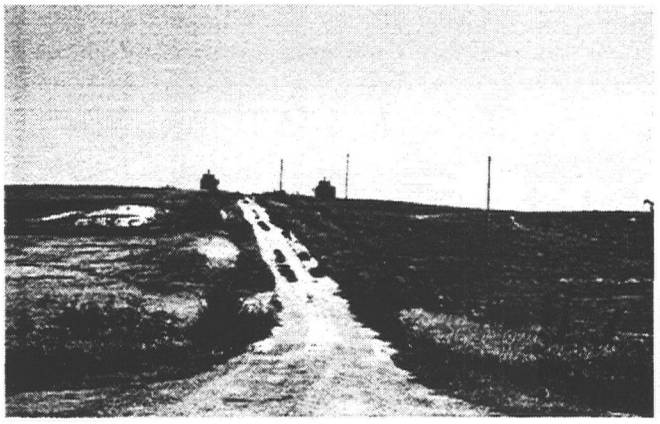


Photo 28.
Oil drilling rigs and storage tanks dot the Township landscape, particularly, as shown here, along US Highway 24.

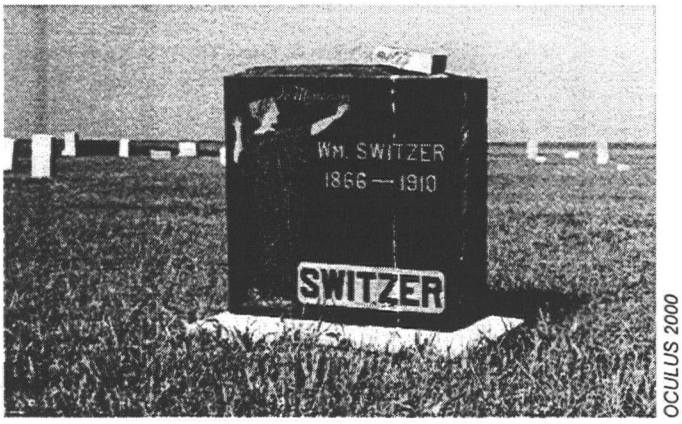


Photo 31.
William Switzer headstone within the Nicodemus Cemetery.

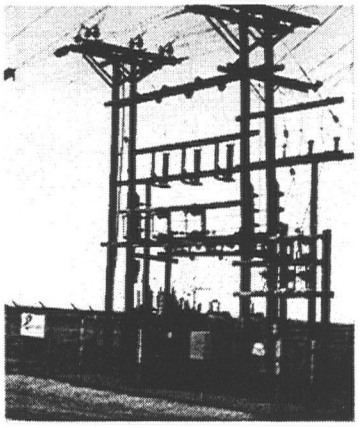


Photo 29.
An electrical sub-station in the northeastern portion of the Township.

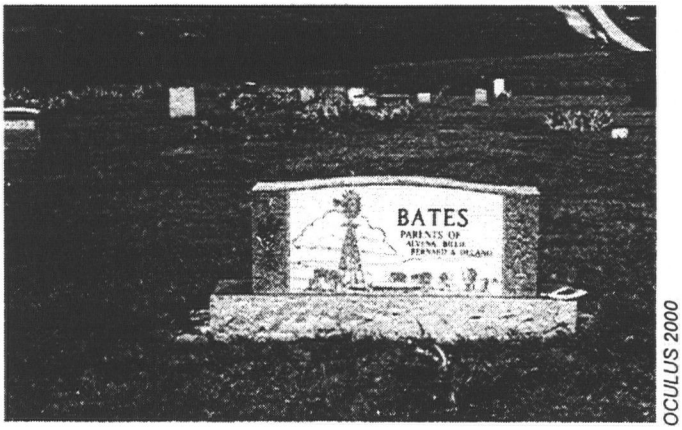


Photo 32.
Bates family headstone, Mount Olive Cemetery.



Photo 33.
A grid planting of Eastern red cedars within Nicodemus Cemetery.

Cemeteries. The approximately two-acre Mount Olive Cemetery is located to the west of Spring Creek and approximately two miles north of Bogue. Nicodemus Cemetery, one and one-half acres in size, is located approximately one mile north of the Nicodemus townsite. These cemeteries include graves that date from the late nineteenth century through the present. They are both composed of relatively open, grassy field areas enclosed within barbed wire and metal and wood post fencing, dotted with granite head- and footstones (*Photos 31 and 32*), and other types of markers, and small gridded plantings of cedar trees (*Photo 33*). The graves in both cemeteries are arranged in north-south rows, with stones oriented to face west; "The pattern of burials appears to follow a northern European-Anglo folk tradition of orienting the body with the head to the west and the feet to the east, reflecting the belief that the body will rise up out of the grave, facing east towards the rising sun and the symbolic Jerusalem on the Judgement Day."[11] Iris and other perennials such as daylilies have been planted in association with a few graves in each of the cemeteries.

Cultural Traditions Associated with Nicodemus Township

Review of historic Nicodemus newspapers and oral histories indicate that the nineteenth-century residents of the larger community of Nicodemus strove to live like any other northwestern Kansas town or community—they wanted to fit in and be respected, raise a family, and earn a living. Generally, they used the same building materials, the same vernacular architecture, planted the same crops, and had access to the same consumer goods. However, there are traditions and associated resources, both ongoing and of the past, that are important or unique to this community and set it apart from other towns and communities of the same period of origin. These include:

SOUTH FORK SOLOMON RIVER AND SPRING CREEK BAPTISMS

Nicodemus residents are known to have frequently used the South Fork Solomon River and Spring Creek for baptisms. This practice apparently fell out of use during the 1960s. Baptisms are also known to have been performed in the inundated sand borrow pit east of Bogue. This practice ceased after a new church was built there in the 1970s, and baptisms were subsequently performed within the church. It is likely that other regional towns and residents of northwestern Kansas may have also used rivers and streams for baptism, but perhaps not to the extent that Nicodemus residents did. Further research is recommended to determine whether this practice was brought to the area by people formerly enslaved in the South, where river baptisms were practiced by whites and blacks alike.

WELTON/SCRUGGS'S GROVE, NICODEMUS TOWNSITE, AND EMANCIPATION/HOMECOMING CELEBRATIONS

The Emancipation/Homecoming celebration has been held annually within Nicodemus, with the exception of one year, for more than 100 years. The event, which began as a way to mark the emancipation of West Indies slaves on August 1, 1834, took place in Scruggs's Grove until the late 1940s. Groves have been, and occasionally still are, used in many parts of the country for summer festivals and various types of rituals. Homecoming, as it is now called, has since evolved into a celebration of community heritage and continuity, attended by local persons as well as family members, descendants, and others with connections to Nicodemus who come from around the US. It is now held primarily within the townsite, and is described in more detail in the next section.

[11] National Park Service, "DRAFT Cultural Landscapes Inventory—Level 1; Nicodemus National Historic Site (Kansas)," July 29-30, 1997, n.p.

MOUNT OLIVE AND NICODEMUS CEMETERIES AND GRAVE DECORATION

Oral histories indicate that during the mid-twentieth century Nicodemus residents annually celebrated 'Decoration Day' when descendants placed flowers on the gravesites of loved ones. A particular species of white flower—soapwort—was picked the day before and used to decorate the graves; afterwards a picnic was held in town. This practice, which is not unique to Nicodemus, has evolved into a less formal event, but descendants still return periodically from various places around the country to place flowers on the graves of loved ones.

GARDENING AND FARMING PRACTICES AND OPERATIONS

Traditionally, Nicodemus community members have grown much of their own food. Male family members have been responsible primarily for the crop farming and raising of livestock, while women have tended vegetable garden plots and gathered wild greens, medicinal plants, fruits, and berries. Residents have traditionally known where to collect desirable greens and other edible plants within the area. Children have been brought up to help with both, starting with vegetable gardening. Vegetable garden plots have traditionally been sited in close proximity to the house, or at the edges of crop fields. Vegetable gardens have typically supported family needs, with excess produce canned for winter consumption. Nicodemus is by no means unusual in these practices; throughout the Midwest, expedience and economy have been important habits, as has the ability to meet basic needs using a minimum of resources.

Traditionally, Nicodemus residents have practiced dry-land farming, growing wheat, corn, and sorghum over two-thirds of the land under agricultural production, and maintaining hay fields to pasture cattle over the remaining one-third. Soil and water conservation practices, including the use of terracing and contour plowing to conserve soil and prevent runoff from stormwater, have been implemented by local farmers since the 1950s. Farm ponds and terraces were also developed to facilitate infiltration of stormwater after devastating floods in the 1950s. Some local farmers have begun to utilize no-till methods, which appear to further promote stormwater infiltration. No-till requires acquisition and application of expensive chemicals, however, and is not widely practiced in the region. Irrigation, which is expensive due to the fuel costs associated with powering the equipment, is also not widely practiced in the region; within the Township, irrigation is only practical along the South Fork Solomon River where groundwater is available. The majority of the Township does not have access to the Ogallala aquifer, which provides the primary source of water for irrigation within the region. Water for livestock is typically acquired through wells, or the damming of drainageways to create stock ponds.

Inventory of Township Landscape Features

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

- river and terrace system of the South Fork Solomon River corridor and its tributaries
- two springs along banks of Spring Creek
- water course and riparian corridor system of Spring Creek and its tributaries
- rock outcroppings
- broad plateaus and systems of gently rolling terrain composed of ridges, knolls, and narrow valleys
- wetland areas and systems associated with drainage, stream, and river corridors

RESPONSES TO NATURAL FEATURES AND SYSTEMS

- bridge and low-water bridge crossings of waterways and drainages along road corridors
- road-related drainage systems including ditches, swales, and culverts
- windbreak plantings associated with house and farm complexes
- siting of farm complexes within groves or woodlots
- windmills
- water tanks, agricultural irrigation systems
- farm ponds and tanks (small ponds for watering livestock)
- sand and gravel borrow pits
- stone quarry areas
- oil drilling rigs, wells
- dump sites
- in-ground feed storage
- drinking-water wells
- designated hunting lands
- channelized drainageways and agricultural-drainage ditch systems
- farming operations, terracing
- farming operations, pasture on slopes and within drainageways
- farming operations, crops located on more level and gently sloped lands

PATTERNS OF SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

- broad expanses of crop fields on upland plateaus and ridge systems
- narrow to wide wooded riparian corridors
- narrow to wide riparian corridors in open fields
- Township and Range system evident in orthogonal road alignments, field patterns, fencelines, and hedgerows
- farm clusters with associated windbreaks and tree clusters within open agricultural lands
- farm clusters within groves or woodlots
- spaces and corridors created by abutting crops of differing heights

BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS

- South Fork Solomon River forming the southern edge of the Township
- roads
- fencelines
- field patterns

LAND USES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- cemetery—Mount Olive and Nicodemus
- agricultural—cropland
- agricultural—pastureland
- agricultural—fallow fields
- agricultural—irrigation systems, windmills
- agricultural—farm and livestock support facilities, in-ground feed storage areas
- utility—electrical, telephone, and cable TV lines and corridors
- utility—drinking-water wells, water supply tanks
- transmission—radio tower
- residential
- commercial
- industrial—sand and gravel borrow pits, oil drilling rigs and wells and associated support facilities, dumps
- recreational—hunting on private and designated public lands, sports or ballfields, swimming holes, Homecoming Celebration

VEGETATION

- riparian vegetation systems including tree cover along drainage, stream, and river corridors
- crop fields
- grass fields and pastureland
- remnant prairie vegetation
- hedgerows
- windbreaks
- walnut grove, pear and crabapple orchard
- ornamental plantings associated with house sites
- vegetable gardens
- flower beds

CIRCULATION

- US Highway 24, graded and asphalt paved
- remnant road grades and paved segments associated with western section US Highway 24
- unimproved roads
- graded and drained roads
- gravel or crushed stone/shale roads, graded and drained
- access drives and roads to residences and farm complexes and facilities
- vehicle tracks and access routes within agricultural lands
- trails and paths

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES, AND STRUCTURAL CLUSTERS[12]

- Nicodemus townsite including numerous dwellings and related structures (*see next section of this chapter for detailed lists of buildings, structures, and clusters*)
- Billie Jo Worcester property, farmstead with cluster of buildings including large corrugated metal barn or shed structure
- Leon Stephens & G. Schmidt property, abandoned farmstead with buildings and ruins
- Charles Clark Rev. Trust property, abandoned frame building
- L. Frasca property, frame dwelling and associated outbuildings
- Leon & Agnes Stephens property, farmsteads with dwelling and clusters of buildings
- Tim Berland property, farmstead with dwelling and outbuilding(s?)
- Kenneth & Bobbie Holsman property, farmstead with cluster of outbuildings
- Esther Clark property, abandoned farmstead, no data on surviving buildings
- Veryl Switzer properties, two abandoned farmsteads, no data on surviving buildings
- Sharon Dowdell property, farmstead with dwelling

[12] Property ownership and building inventory information relates to 2000 conditions.

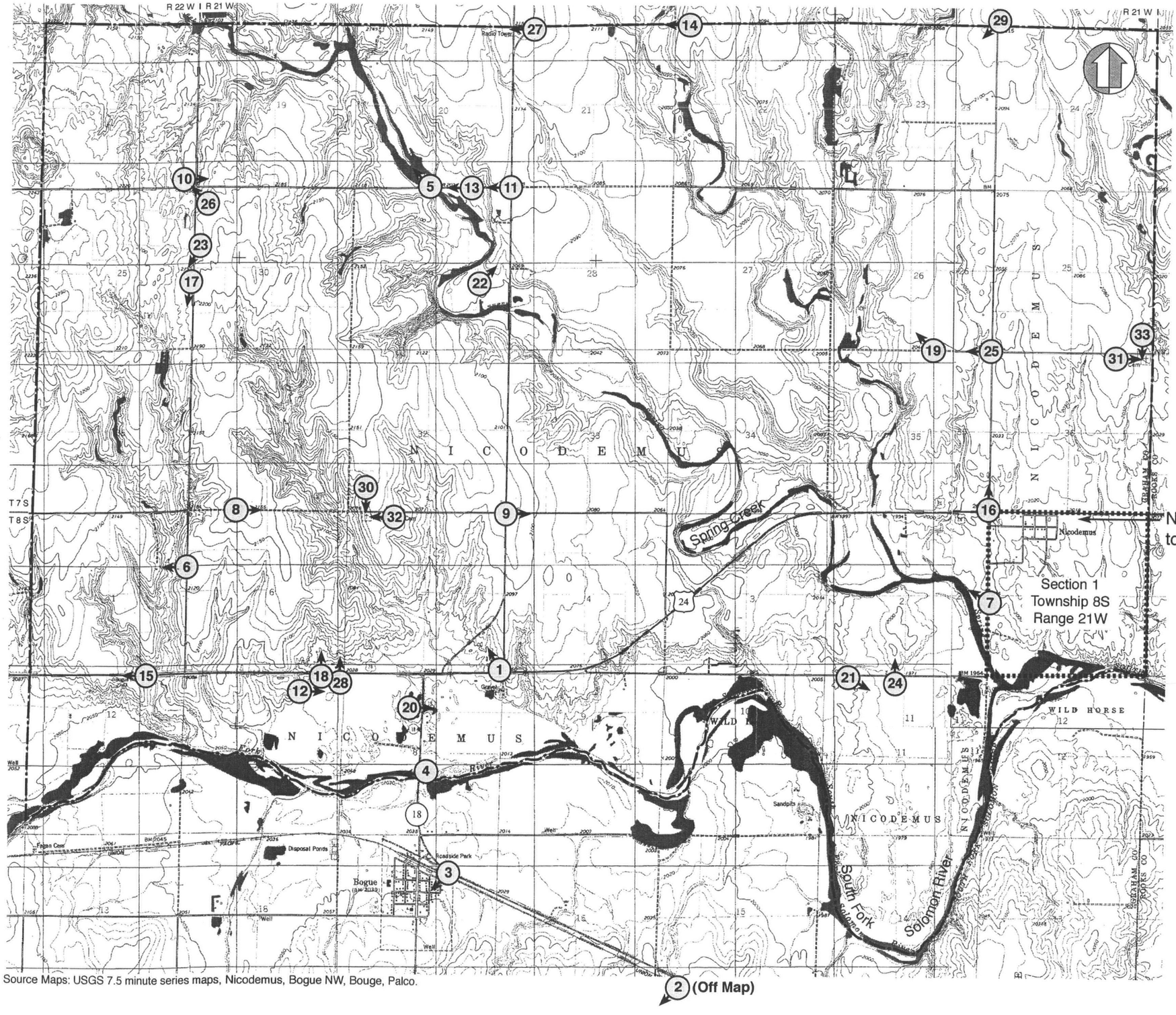
- Lois Alexander Living Trust property, farmstead with cluster of buildings
- Joetta E. & Marbury Nevins property, farmstead with abandoned dwelling
- James R. Bates property, farmstead with dwelling
- Veryl Switzer property, farmstead with dwelling, windmill, possibly outbuildings
- Philip Clark property, farmstead with dwelling
- Leroy Nevins et al. property, farmstead with abandoned dwelling and likely two outbuildings
- Scott Hart property, farmstead with dwelling, possibly outbuildings
- Betty & Cecil Bumper property, farmstead with frame dwelling, windmill, various outbuildings, trailer, concrete block shed
- Gaylan & Dianna Gosselin property, farmstead with dwelling, frame shed, corrugated metal outbuildings, concrete block shed
- Roderick & Ronald Buckner property, abandoned farmstead with frame dwelling, outbuildings
- Cecil E. Carender property, farmstead with dwelling, two outbuildings
- Thomas Dabney property, farmstead with dwelling
- Dale & Linda Jones property, farmstead with dwelling and cluster of buildings
- remote silos and livestock and agricultural storage facilities
- radio tower
- windmills
- oil drilling rigs and associated support and storage facilities
- electrical power sub-station
- large-scale above-ground irrigation systems

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES AND SYSTEMS

- cemetery head- and footstones
- barbed-wire fencing
- wood post and rail fencing
- metal gates
- cattle guards
- livestock- and other agriculturally-oriented features and systems
- irrigation equipment and systems
- decorative residential yard features
- bird houses and boxes
- mailboxes
- directional, informational, and regulatory signs and sign systems
- painted tire signs

CULTURAL TRADITIONS

- Emancipation/Homecoming Celebration in Nicodemus
- grave "Decoration Day" and picnics associated with Mount Olive and Nicodemus Cemeteries and the Nicodemus townsite
- farming practices and operations including crop selection and irrigation methods
- gathering of wild greens, fruits, and berries, and medical plants, supplementing intensive vegetable gardening around the house and at the edges of agricultural fields to supply family produce needs



Legend

- Township Boundary
- Section 1 Boundary
- Improved Roads
- Local Unimproved Roads
- Tree Cover
- 19 Photograph Orientation

One Mile
Contour Interval = 10 ft

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
TOWNSHIP MAP

Figure 119.
Photographic station points map, Nicodemus Township.

Summary of Existing Knowledge of Archeological Resources

Very little appears to have been written about known and potential archeological resources associated with Nicodemus Township. It is likely that both prehistoric and historic subsurface deposits exist throughout the region, and may yield information that will supplement our existing knowledge of the prehistory and history of the area. The only archeological survey on record with the Kansas State Historical Society for Nicodemus Township dates from 1992. A Phase II archeological field survey investigation was prepared to determine whether a proposed borrow project to be conducted along US Highway 24 near the townsite would impact any archeological resources. Through the archeological investigation, one significant historic archeological site was identified—14GH326—within the limits of the proposed borrow area. The site includes remains of a dugout and stone house ruin dating from the early Nicodemus townsite development period. Consultation with local residents suggested "that other outbuildings, corrals, a pump house, and a sod house may have also stood in or adjacent to the proposed borrow" location.[13] The Phase II Survey suggested that the proposed borrow site be relocated based on the significance of these findings.

Presently, a strong avenue for future archeological investigation involves the numerous sites where buildings and structures are known to have existed. Once the focus of future archeological investigations has been determined, there will likely be numerous sites with the potential to yield important information about different aspects of the region's history. The known sites of former and current farmstead clusters representing potential archeological resources have been identified below as part of the inventory of Township Landscape Features. They are illustrated through the HABS mapping depicted in *figures 120* and *121*.

SITES, POTENTIAL ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

See figure 120. Township settlement sites, ca. 1880–1900. Sites and properties

Section 23, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Veryl Switzer property, includes ruins of dugout, cattle shed, and cellar sites [property appears ca. 1920 under ownership of Henry Williams]

Section 25, Township 7S, Range 22W

- Stehno Farms property, includes ruins [property occupied as early as 1880–1900 by L. Serena, also appears ca. 1920 under ownership of Luis Serena]

Section 36, Township 7S, Range 22W

- Nicodemus Cemetery

Section 35, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Cynthia Witman & Ja Vanek property, includes ruins [property occupied as early as 1880–1900 by G. Moore, also appears ca. 1920 under ownership of George Moore]
- Ruth Finney et al. property, includes ruins [property occupied as early as 1880–1900 by J. Vaughn, also appears ca. 1920 under ownership of John Vaughn]

Section 31, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Mount Olive School ruins [school appears as early as 1880–1900, abandoned by 1920]
- Roena Hicks Trust property, includes ruins [property occupied as early as 1880–1900 by H. Fox, also appears ca. 1920 under ownership of Jerry Scruggs]

Section 2, Township 8S, Range 21W

- Rosetta Alexander property, includes ruins [property occupied as early as 1880–1900 by C. Reynolds, also appears ca. 1920 under ownership of Eliza Buckner]

Section 5, Township 8S, Range 21W

- Mount Olive Church ruins, Cemetery [structure established as early as 1880–1900]
- Dorotha Herndon property, includes former gas station ruins

[13] Williams, "Archeological Survey in Graham County, Kansas," 2.

DEVELOPED PROPERTIES THOUGHT TO HAVE EXISTED CIRCA 1880–1900[14] *THAT ARE NO LONGER EXTANT*

Section 24, Township 7S, Range 21W

- R.D. Girley—later, ca. 1920 Richard Girley property

Section 23, Township 7S, Range 21W

- T. Johnson
- S.M. Lee—later, ca. 1920, Harry Bates property

Section 22, Township 7S, Range 21W

- W. Switzer likely dugout/sod house—later, ca. 1920, Emma Williams property

Section 21, Township 7S, Range 21W

- J.L. Dodson

Section 30, Township 7S, Range 21W

- L. Van Duvall

Section 29, Township 7S, Range 21W

- W. Neal

Section 27, Township 7S, Range 21W

- J.A. Deprad
- B.B. Smith

Section 26, Township 7S, Range 21W

- J.C. Coleman—later, ca. 1920, H.H. Clark property
- L. Redd—later, ca. 1920, Lewis Redd property

Section 25, Township 7S, Range 21W

- R. Latham
- E. Battles, likely dugout/sod house—later, ca. 1920, J. Cassie Bibb property, currently James R. Bates farmstead
- M. Wims

Section 36, Township 7S, Range 21W

- W. Coleman
- R.D. Girley—later, ca. 1920, Richard Girley property

Section 35, Township 7S, Range 21W

- J. Allsup
- T.J. Fletcher

Section 34, Township 7S, Range 21W

- D. Johnson
- G. Smith

Section 33, Township 7S, Range 21W

- V.B.G. Scruggs

Section 32, Township 7S, Range 21W

- A.S. Smith
- E. Taylor

Section 36, Township 7S, Range 21W

- J. Griffie—later, ca. 1920, James Griffie property
- P. Bates—later, ca. 1920, Perry Bates property, currently Cecil E. Carender property that includes a farmstead

Section 4, Township 8S, Range 21W

- W. Kirtley—later, ca. 1920, Jim Bates property
- R. Burnsides

Section 3, Township 8S, Range 21W

- J.P. Bates—later, ca. 1920, J.W. Lored property
- J. Lored
- B.L. Lewis

Section 2, Township 8S, Range 21W

- Z.T. Fletcher

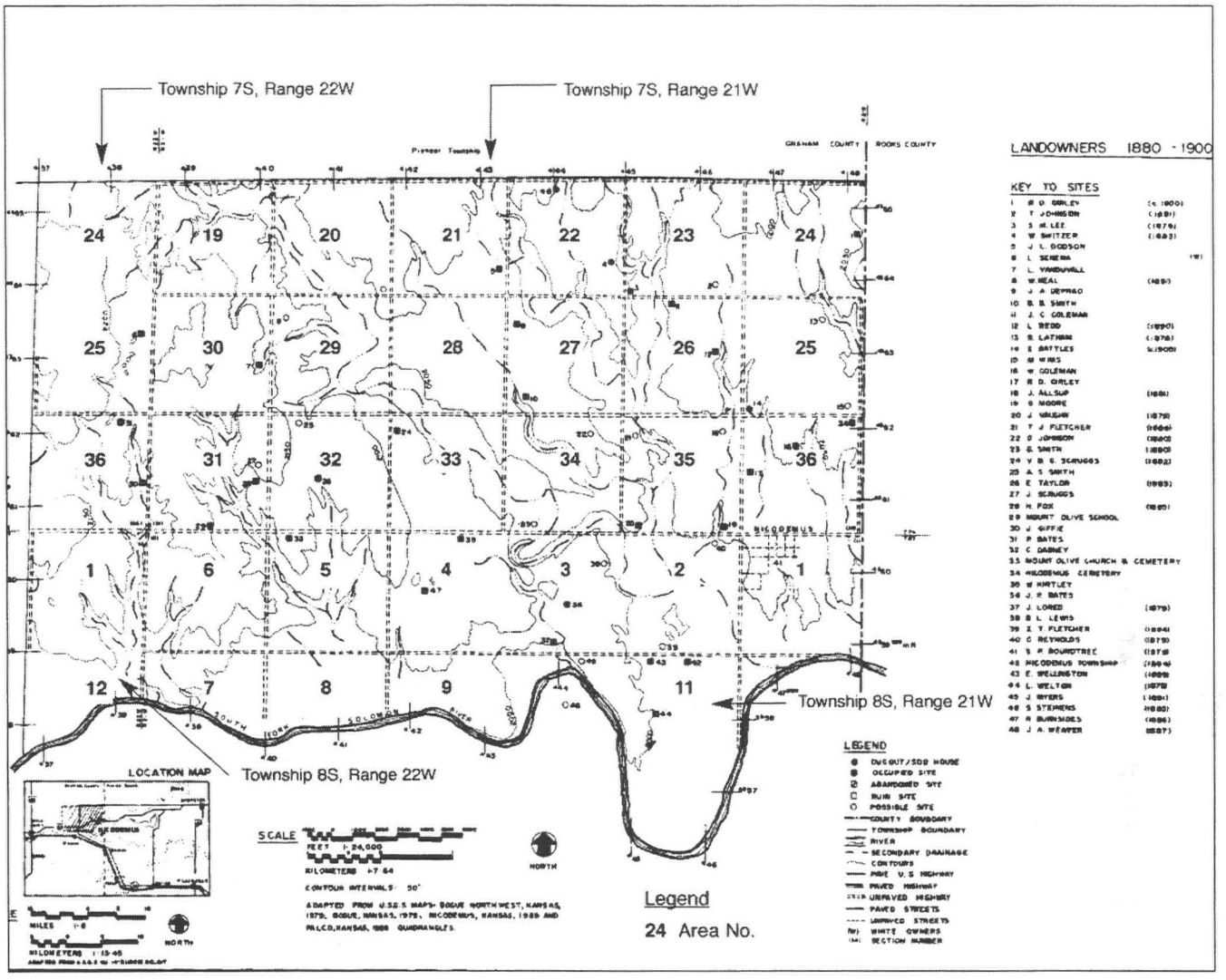
Section 11, Township 8S, Range 21W

- Nicodemus Township (listed as owner)
- E. Wellington—later, ca. 1920, R.B. Scruggs property, abandoned
- L. Welton—later, ca. 1920, Lewis Welton property
- site of Welton/Scruggs's Grove

Section 10, Township 8S, Range 21W

- J. Myers

[14] Data derived from 1983 HABS study. See map of "Settlement in Nicodemus Township, Landowners, 1880-1900" for the locations of these developed properties.



(Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983.)

Figure 120.
Settlement sites with landowners, Nicodemus Township ca. 1880–1900.

DEVELOPED PROPERTIES (NOT LISTED ABOVE) THOUGHT TO HAVE EXISTED CIRCA 1920[15] *BUT THAT ARE NO LONGER EXTANT*

See figure 121. Township settlement sites, ca. 1920.

Section 24, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Lizzie Robinson property

Section 23, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Fairview School property
- Andrew Alexander property

Section 22, Township 7S, Range 21W

- T. Wellington property
- Bud Elliott property
- John Deprad property

Section 21, Township 7S, Range 21W

- J.A. Weaver property

Section 20, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Clifford Bondy property
- Lyle Stephens property
- School District No. 27 property
- Mitch Adams property

Section 29, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Alex Alexander property
- Ace Williams property
- John Luck property

Section 27, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Bud Napue property
- Herbert Horton property

Section 26, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Alexander Van Duvall property

Section 25, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Chris Hall property

Section 36, Township 7S, Range 21W

- baseball field site across US Highway 24 from townsite

Section 35, Township 7S, Range 21W

- W.A. Ward property
- Nathaniel Moore property

Section 34, Township 7S, Range 21W

- William Lacey property
- Ed Sayers property

Section 33, Township 7S, Range 21W

- Lizzie Lored property
- William Hackett property
- Kitty Wilson property

Section 31 Township 7S, Range 21W

- A. Diesben property, ruins

Section 1, Township 8S, Range 22W

- J.B. Lewis property
- John Edwards property

Section 6, Township 8S, Range 21W

- George Carpenter property
- R. Booker property
- Claude Robinson property

Section 5, Township 8S, Range 21W

- G.A. Fox property

Section 4, Township 8S, Range 21W

- Neil and Davenport Williams property
- William Kirtley property

Section 3, Township 8S, Range 21W

- Howard Cushionberry property

Section 2, Township 8S, Range 21W

- Earl Nevins property

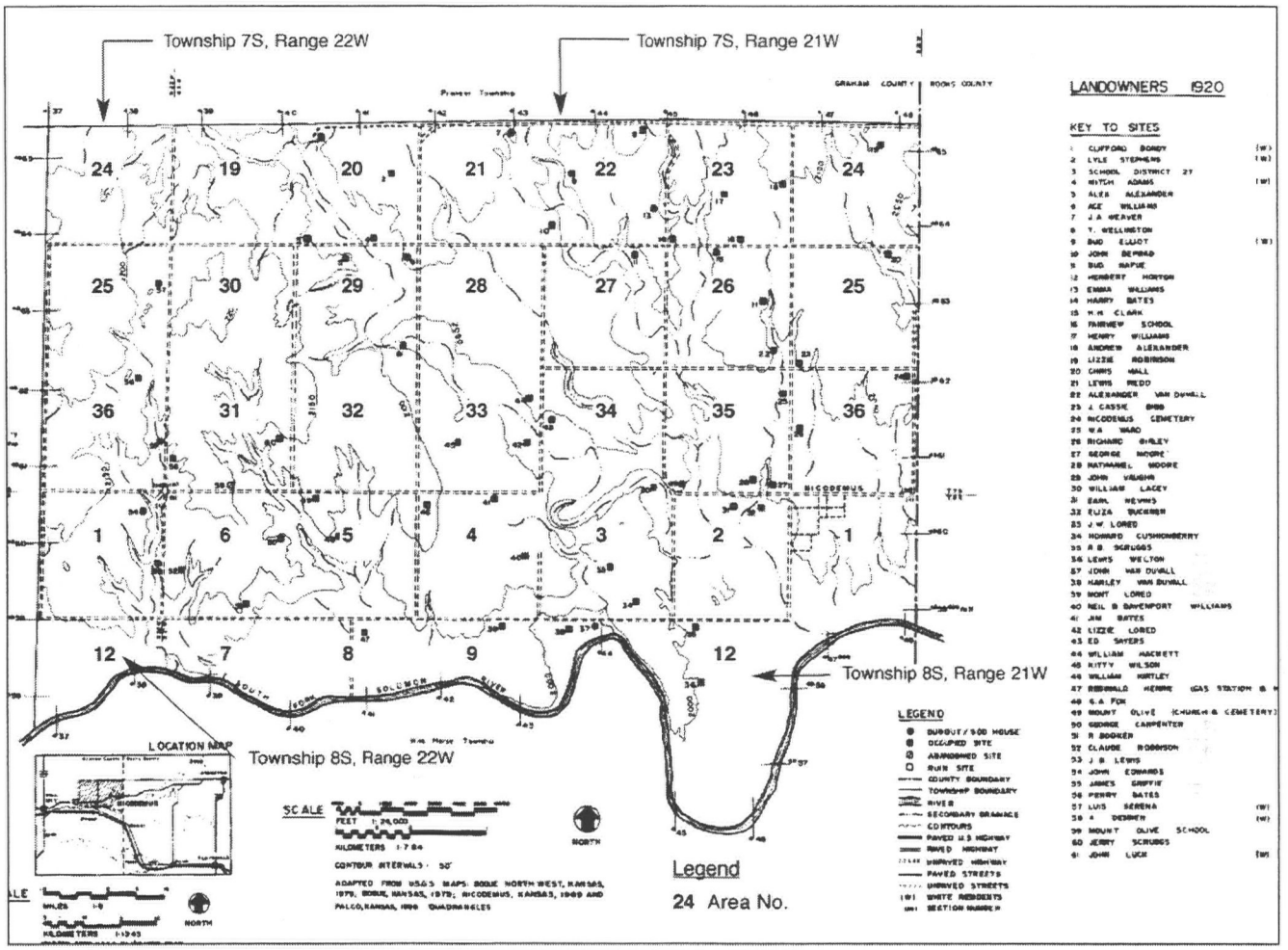
Section 10, Township 8S, Range 21W

- John Van Duvall property, dugout or sod dwelling
- Harley Van Duvall property

Section 8, Township 8S, Range 21W

- Reginald Henries property, gas station and residence

[15] Data derived from 1983 HABS study. See figure 120. map of "Settlement in Nicodemus Township, Landowners, 1880-1900" for the locations of these developed properties.



(Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983.)

Figure 121.
Settlement sites with landowners, Nicodemus Township ca. 1920.



Map Sources: USGS 7.5 minute series mapping, Nicodemus Quadrangle, and HABS study, landscape ca. 1983

Figure 122.
Base map and photographic station points map, Nicodemus townsite, 2000.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE SECTION 1 LANDSCAPE, FOCUSING ON THE NICODEMUS TOWNSITE

See figure 122. Base map and photographic station points map of the townsite

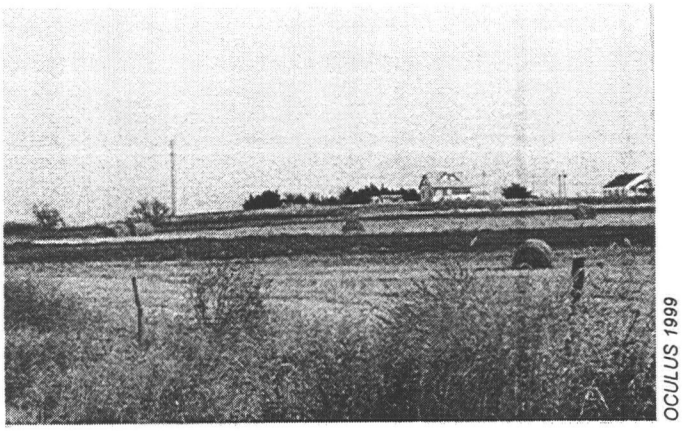
Nicodemus is an unincorporated town of twenty to thirty residents that is comprised of dwellings, institutional facilities, municipal structures and facilities, a grid of paved and unpaved roads, access drives, paths and trails, historical markers, agricultural fields and features, grassy lawns, and ornamental, shade, and windbreak plantings. (*Photo 34*) The Nicodemus townsite is located twelve miles east of the county seat of Hill City along the eastern edge of Nicodemus Township within the northwestern quarter of Section 1, Township 8 South, Range 21 West. The 161.35-acre square quarter section that constitutes the townsite is a National Historical Landmark District.

Much of the Section, including portions of the townsite, is comprised of open agricultural land. The farmlands are used to grow vegetables and crops, and pasture livestock, although portions of the Section appear to be fallow. The Section is edged to the north by US Highway 24, to the east by the Rooks County line, and to the south lies the confluence of Spring Creek and the South Fork Solomon River. The western edge of the Section is partially marked by a rural roadway. The majority of the land surrounding the Section is used for agriculture.

The Section is generally devoid of tree cover except along the river and creek margins, and around the farmsteads and some of the townsite properties. The townsite sits on a relatively level to gently undulating plateau fifty to seventy feet above the South Fork Solomon River. To the south of the townsite, the land falls away steeply as it approaches the river. Small, unnamed perennial streams and intermittent drainageways flow from the upland area of the townsite toward the South Fork Solomon River.

A system of public roads forms an incomplete grid of streets within the townsite. The named roads that form the grid of the town include, running west-east:

- South Street or Frontage Road (which parallels US Highway 24)
- Washington Avenue (commonly referred to as Main Street)
- Adams Avenue
- Madison Avenue



OCULUS 1999

Photo 34.
View towards the Nicodemus townsite from the south.

- Monroe Avenue (not in evidence)
- Jackson Avenue

and running north-south:

- First Street
- Second Street
- Third Street
- Fourth Street
- Fifth Street
- Sixth Street (not in evidence)
- Seventh Street

Paralleling Washington Avenue to the north is US Highway 24, a two-lane, asphalt paved road that provides access into the community at First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Seventh Streets, and a residence that fronts the highway near Seventh Street. South Street is an access road that parallels Highway 24 closely to its south. South Street, and some of the other roads within the townsite are paved with asphalt and include concrete curb and gutter improvements (*Photo 35*); others are composed of unpaved hard-packed earth (*Photos 36 and 37*). Third and Fifth Streets are the only north-south routes that extend south beyond Madison Avenue. Along the lower edge of the Section there is an additional unimproved roadway that leads to an outlying dwelling. Seventh Street edges the Section. It continues to the south for an additional mile before heading west and joining US Highway 24. It also extends to the north for five and one-half miles. It is paved with stabilized gravel. Other circulation within the townsite consists of:

- concrete sidewalks that provide access to the "Villa" complex, edge Fourth Street outside the First Baptist Church, and lead to the entrances of some buildings, such as the Township Hall;

- crushed stone and hard-packed earth access drives to various residences; and
- hard-packed earth paths leading to the Clementine Vaughn House and between the St. Francis Hotel and Fred and Iva Lee Switzer House.

There are also asphalt, crushed stone, and hard-packed earth parking areas associated with many of the institutional and municipal structures and complexes.

Nicodemus townsite includes both publicly and privately owned parcels and some twenty to thirty residential buildings and structures *(Photos 38 and 39)*. These range from frame and brick dwellings to manufactured trailer homes, frame and metal outbuildings, and municipal and institutional structures. Some of the structures within the townsite have been abandoned and are in poor or dilapidated condition (*Photo 40*). Five or six properties that include buildings and outbuildings lie outside the townsite but within the Section.

Nicodemus Township municipal services and facilities are concentrated within the townsite. These include a fire station, municipal garage (*Photo 41*), municipal sewage lagoons, a water tower (*Photo 42*), Township Hall, and a six-unit Housing and Urban Development residential complex referred to locally as "the Villa." (*Photo 43*) Also located within the southern portion of the townsite is the Nicodemus Historical Society, housed in a former residence.

Other cultural features associated with the townsite landscape include informational, interpretive, and directional signage, wooden utility poles, mailboxes *(Photo 44)*, a parking meter *(Photo 45)*, water pumps *(Photo*

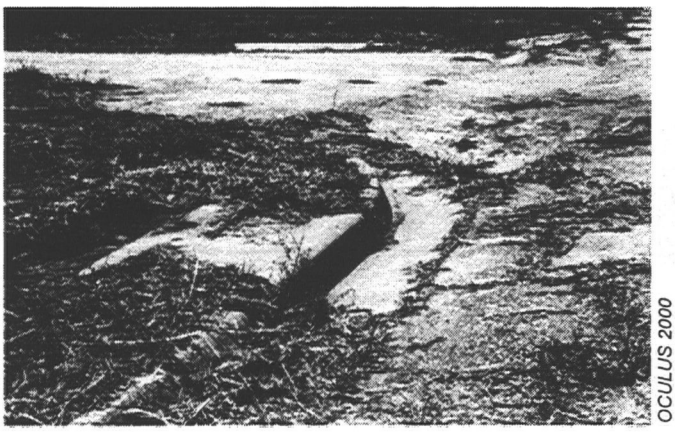


Photo 35.
Concrete curb and gutter improvements along Washington Avenue.



Photo 37.
View west along Washington Avenue.



Photo 36.
View south along Second Street within the town of Nicodemus.

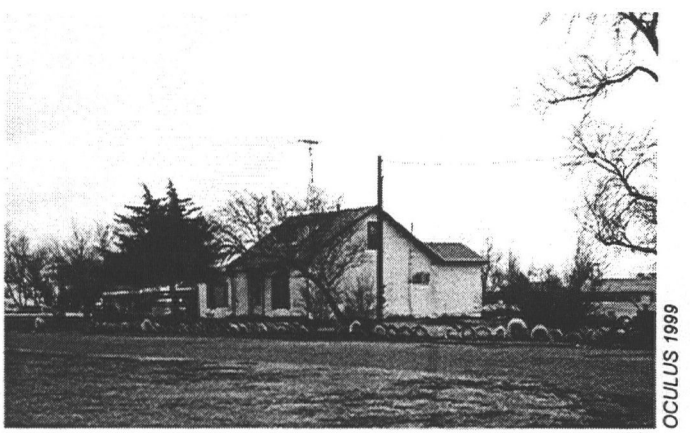


Photo 38.
View southeast of tire edging along Adams Avenue.

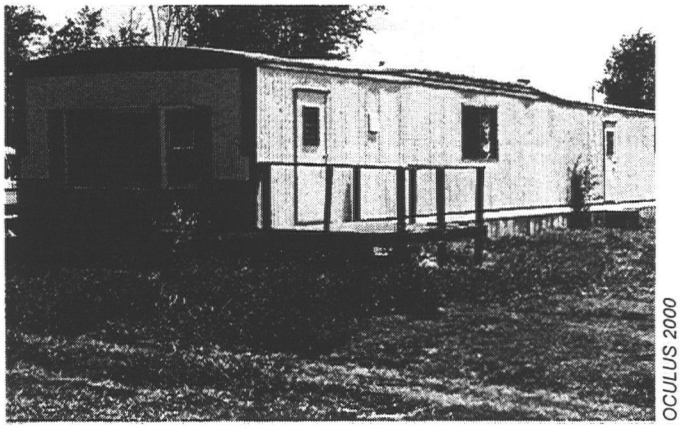


Photo 39.
A trailer home within the townsite.

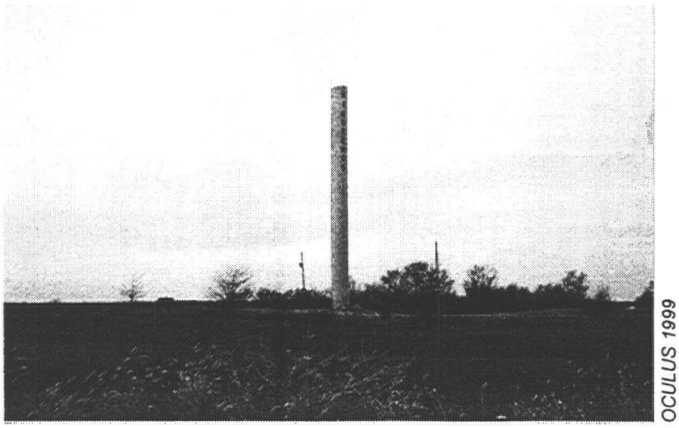


Photo 42.
The Nicodemus municipal water tower.



Photo 40.
View southeast toward an abandoned house located along Fourth Street.

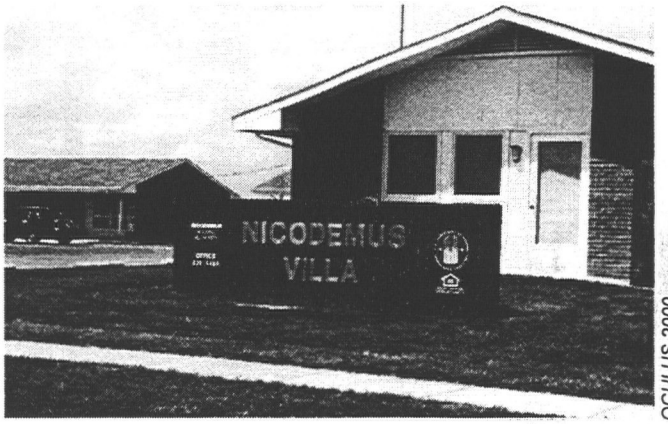


Photo 43.
The "Villa,"a HUD-sponsored residential complex within the townsite.

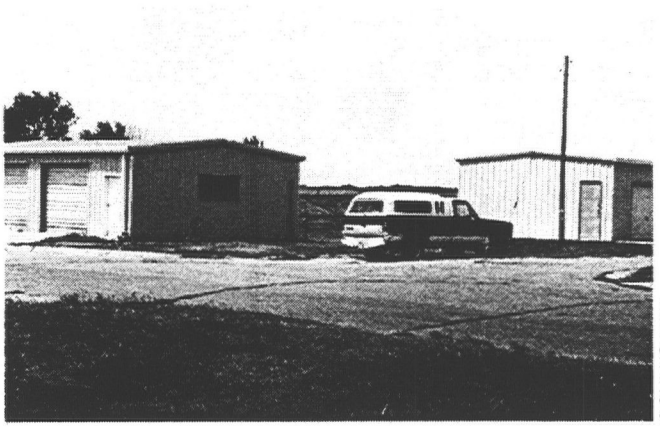


Photo 41.
Municipal garage and fire station along Washington Avenue.



Photo 44.
A mailbox set within a milk jug along Washington Avenue.

46), and propane and butane tanks. Site furnishings located within the townsite include benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, and flagpoles. There are also windbreak and ornamental plantings, crop fields *(Photo 47)* and vegetable gardens, and livestock pens and shelters *(Photo 48)*. Chain link fencing encloses the municipal sewage lagoons, as well as the basketball/tennis court at the Township Hall. Wood post and woven wire mesh fencing is used for animal pens on some properties. Wooden snow fencing limits access to portions of the A.M.E. Church that are in disrepair. One of the residential properties is edged along its property boundary by tires set on edge in the ground *(Photo 38)*. Townsite recreational features include playground equipment, basketball and tennis courts with overhead lights, and a baseball field with backstop *(Photo 49)*.

In addition to the townsite's physical resources, there are cultural traditions associated with the Nicodemus landscape that support a better understanding of the place. One well-known tradition associated with the Nicodemus community is the annual Emancipation Celebration, now referred to as Homecoming. The festivities associated with this event, held during the last weekend in July, have traditionally included parades, carnival rides, baseball games, fashion shows, music, religious services, political rallies, and picnicking, although the specific activities change from year to year. Carnivals, rides, and political rallies, which used to take place, for example, have not been held for some years. Homecoming is a tremendously popular event that draws upwards of 1,000 people *(Photo 50)*. The celebration was moved to the townsite in the early 1950s, where it continues to be held today. Washington Avenue is used for the parade *(Photos 51 and 52)*; the Township Hall for meetings, announcements and information *(Photo 53)*, and the annual fashion show; the Baptist Church for services and gospel singing events; and the Roadside and Township Parks for picnicking and vendor booths.



Photo 45.
A parking meter and mailbox along Washington Avenue.

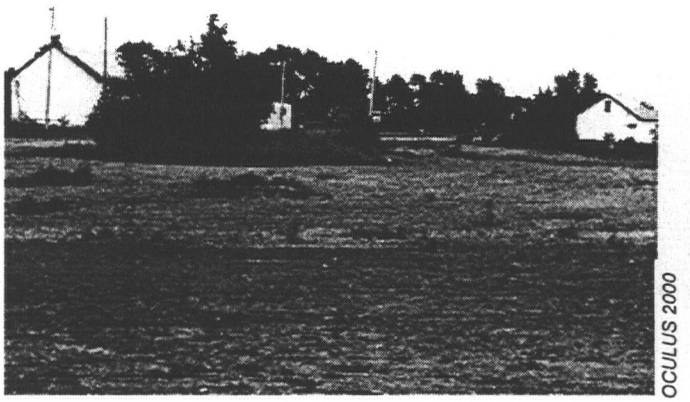


Photo 47.
Crop fields along the southern edge of the townsite.



Photo 46.
A water pump on a residential property within the townsite.



Photo 48.
View east of a hog pen and shelter located along Fifth Street.

As noted in the 1993 *Special Resource Study* of the townsite:

> like other small Kansas towns, the lack of jobs, housing, and community services has resulted in a decline in the population and economy. The townsite is occupied by only [a few] households...yet a strong feeling of community still permeates the town, a feeling cultivated and fueled by more than one hundred years of perseverance and unwillingness to surrender this living reminder of the contributions of their forebears.[16]



Photo 51.
The Homecoming celebration includes a parade along Washington Avenue.

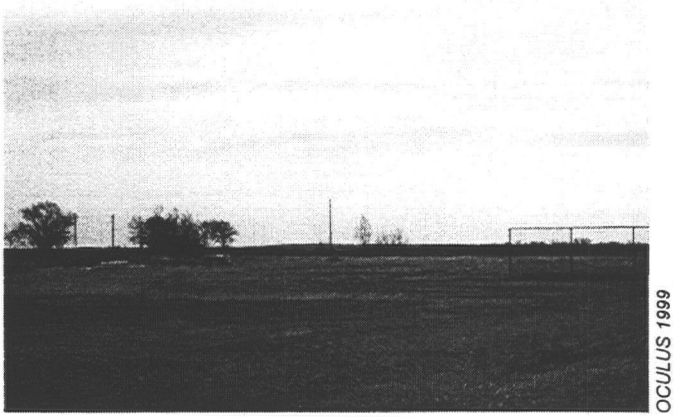


Photo 49.
View east of the baseball field backstop located east of Fourth Street near the District No. 1 Schoolhouse.



Photo 52.
Another view of the Homecoming parade, 2000.



Photo 50.
Darren Berry and Margo Willis, Jones family descendants, returning to Nicodemus for Homecoming 2000. They are standing in front of the Villa along Washington Avenue.

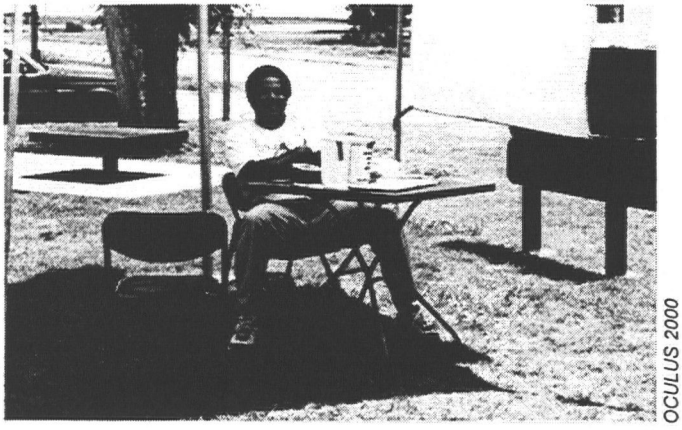


Photo 53.
Mitchell Pearson, a representative of AmeriCorps Kansas, attended Homecoming 2000 to solicit volunteer help for the "Nicodemus Community Clean Up Project" which was held later that year.

[16] National Park Service, *Nicodemus, Kansas; Special Resource Study*, U.S. Department of the Interior, May 1993, 12.

Inventory of Section 1 Landscape Features

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

- Spring Creek corridor
- South Fork Solomon River corridor

RESPONSES TO NATURAL FEATURES AND SYSTEMS

- wells
- use of limestone as building material
- siting of town atop a knoll in close proximity to South Fork Solomon River
- curb and gutter drainage improvements associated with paved town roads
- drainage ditches along roads without curb and gutter
- use of shale as road surfacing material to limit dust and mud on hard-packed earth roads

PATTERNS OF SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

- open crop fields on upland plateaus and ridges
- townsite formed of orthogonally-gridded streets edged intermittently by buildings
- narrow to wide riparian corridors edging knoll
- township/range/section system evident in orthogonal road alignments, field patterns, fencelines, and hedgerows
- farm clusters within open agricultural lands
- low-lying areas associated with the South Fork Solomon River and edged by open slopes and wooded areas
- interior areas of town blocks edged by buildings, hedgerows, windbreaks, and clusters of trees

BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS

- South Fork Solomon River
- roads
- fencelines and hedgerows
- field patterns

LAND USES

- recreational—ballfield across from the Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse, Homecoming activities within Nicodemus townsite
- residential
- agricultural—cropland
- agricultural—pastureland and livestock corrals
- undeveloped open space
- municipal (including municipal sewage lagoon)
- utility
- institutional

VEGETATION

- shade trees
- evergreen trees
- evergreen shrubs (i.e. junipers)
- flowering shrubs (i.e. lilacs, roses)
- grassy lawn
- evergreen windbreak plantings
- lines, rows, and double rows of trees along property boundaries
- hedgerows
- crop fields
- vegetable/kitchen gardens
- pasture
- prairie grasslands/meadows

CIRCULATION

- US Highway 24
- South Avenue/Frontage Road
- Washington Avenue
- Adams Avenue
- Madison Avenue
- Jackson Avenue
- First Street
- Second Street
- Third Street
- Fourth Street
- Fifth Street
- Seventh Street
- crushed stone and hard-packed earth access drives to various residences
- paths leading northeast and northwest from Clementine Vaughn House
- path between St. Francis Hotel and Fred and Iva Lee Switzer House
- crushed stone, hard-packed earth, and asphalt parking areas, particularly associated with institutional and municipal complexes
- concrete sidewalks

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

- Fletcher-Switzer residence/St. Francis Hotel (*see next section for more detail*)
- A.M.E. Church (*see next section for more detail*)
- Ernestine Van Duvall Duplex House
- mobile home across street (ownership unknown)
- Virgil and Juanita Robinson House
- Bernard and Ava Bates House
- G. Irvin and Minerva Sayers House and garage
- "The Villa" (HUD housing complex), comprised of six buildings
- mobile home to north (ownership unknown)
- Township Hall (*see next section for more detail*)
- Priscilla Art Club building (*see next section for more detail*)
- two picnic shelters
- Old First Baptist Church (*see next section for more detail*)
- New First Baptist Church and parsonage
- municipal garage
- municipal fire station
- municipal water tower
- Temor Terry House
- William Henry Napue House and garage
- Clarence and Yvonne Sayers House, garage, and outbuilding
- Virgil and Roberta Robinson, Sr. House and shed
- mobile home, possible owners Robert and Billie Brogden
- Alvin and Ada Bates House and garage
- Veryl and Fern Switzer trailer
- four grain bins
- Butler building
- Ordral and Alvena Alexander House and metal outbuilding
- Lloyd Wellington House and garage
- nearby mobile home (ownership unknown)
- Harold and Bernita Switzer trailer (vacant)
- Hattie Craig Burney House and shed
- Jerry Scruggs, Jr. House (vacant)
- nearby mobile home (ownership unknown)
- Orlando and Armatha Napue House (vacant)
- Sahara Moore House, two mobile homes, and shed
- Fred & Iva Lee Switzer House, well house, car park, and shed
- Robert and Bertha Carter House, barn in ruins
- Donald and Pearlena Moore House, machine shop, shed, grain bin, and shed
- St. Francis Hotel sheds
- two nearby mobile homes (ownership unknown)
- Clementine Vaughn House (abandoned)
- Ace Williams House (abandoned)
- District No. 1 Schoolhouse and shed (*see next section for more detail*)
- Guy and Juanita Redd House, garage, three outbuildings, and grain bin
- Calvin Sayers House (abandoned), nearby shed, pole shed
- nearby mobile home (ownership unknown)
- Nicodemus Historical Society building (formerly residence of Ola Wilson)
- Rosa Stokes House, garage, and shed

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

- directional, informational, and regulatory signage
- baseball backstop (metal and wire)
- playground equipment
- stone debris pile (from former Sayers general store)
- stone debris pile (from former Masonic Hall)
- chain link fencing
- wooden fencing
- livestock pens
- dog houses
- historical markers
- overhead lights
- mailboxes
- parking meter
- water pumps
- benches
- picnic tables
- trash receptacles
- flagpoles

UTILITIES

- utility poles with electrical and telephone lines
- butane and propane tanks
- wells
- fire hydrants

POTENTIAL ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE TOWNSITE

See figures 123. through 126. Townsite archeological potential.

Although very little has been written about known and potential archeological resources associated with the Nicodemus townsite, there are likely many potential archeological sites and resources associated with former buildings and other landscape features that have been removed, relocated, or demolished. For example, since NHL designation, the townsite has lost three historic buildings due to deterioration. These include the Sayers general store and post office, built in 1879; the D.L. Stewart residence, built in 1906, and the Masonic Hall, which was razed in 1978. It is likely that the majority of the land fronting Washington Avenue has, at one time or another, served as building sites or important yard areas relating to cultural uses or features. Much of the townsite should be considered to have a high archeological potential and to be sensitive to disturbance.

The discussion that follows identifies the sites of former buildings, structures, and other landscape features, by block, that may constitute potential archeological resources. In locations where new development has likely diminished the archeological potential, sites have not been identified. Both architectural and landscape archeological features have been considered in the discussion. This information was prepared through comparison of existing conditions with the period plans developed to illustrate the chronology of townsite development. This information should by no means be considered a complete listing. Further investigation of both documentary sources and the townsite's physical fabric will be necessary to evaluate and fully determine the archeological potential of the townsite landscape.

Sites and Properties

The Nicodemus townsite has been divided into 15 sub-areas that relate in most cases to the block configurations edged by roads. Each area has been compared against the same location as represented on the CLR period plans for 1879–1888; 1888–1930; and 1945–1956.

In general, the Washington Avenue streetscape is likely rich in archeological potential due to the concentration of cultural development that has occurred there since the 1870s. The properties along Washington Avenue, particularly the former "Public Square" and well at the intersection of Third Street and Washington Avenue are likely to contain a number of potential archeological sites that may yield information concerning the public realm of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Nicodemus. Area 11, which contains the District No. 1 School, is also a potentially rich archeological site due to the various buildings and uses that have been located there. In addition, archeological testing adjacent to and surrounding the A.M.E. Church, Fletcher-Switzer residence, and former Sayers residence may provide useful information about the construction methods and how these structures were used over time.

The following list suggests locations of former landscape features that may constitute potential archeological resources.

AREA 1

Block bound by South and Washington Avenues, Fifth and Seventh Streets

- Scott residence, includes dwelling [property appears 1888–1930]; southeast corner of area.

AREA 2

Block bound by South and Washington Avenues, Fourth and Fifth Streets

- Burkholder residence, includes dwelling [property appears 1879–1888]; northwest corner of area.
- Mercantile store, includes tree-lined unpaved road [property appears 1888–1930]; northern half of area.

AREA 3

Block bound by South and Washington Avenues, Third and Fourth Streets

- Williams grocery store, includes commercial building [property appears 1879–1888]; open land to the east of the First Baptist Church.
- Wilson general store/Sayers general store, includes commercial building [property appears 1879–1888]; open land to the east of the First Baptist Church.
- Miscellaneous auxiliary buildings possibly associated with these commercial buildings; open land to the east of the First Baptist Church.

AREA 4

Block bound by South and Washington Avenues, Second and Third Streets

- Green general store, includes commercial building [property appears 1879–1888]; southwest corner of this area.
- Masonic Hall, stone building [property appears 1879–1888]; this southeast corner is developed and the potential for archeological remains is low in comparison to other sites. Archeological testing may reveal some information on this public building.
- There may be tree coverage dating to the early twentieth century in the northeast corner of this area.

AREA 5

Block bound by South and Washington Avenues, First and Second Streets

- Riley recreation hall, public building [property appears 1888–1930]; this site may be intact despite recent development nearby; testing adjacent to First Avenue may reveal this potential site.
- Reverend Smith residence, includes dwelling [property appears 1945–1956]; northeast corner of the area.
- Methodist Parsonage, includes fenced dwelling [property appears 1945–1956]; lower northwest area of area, adjacent to Second Street.

AREA 6

Block bound by South and Washington Avenues, edge of Townsite and First Street

- Riley restaurant, commercial building [property appears 1888–1930]; southwest corner of the area.

AREA 7

Block bound by Washington and Adams Avenues, edge of Townsite and First Street

- Potential for miscellaneous outbuildings.

AREA 8

Block bound by Washington and Adams Avenues, First and Second Streets

- Jerry Scruggs residence site
- Potential for miscellaneous outbuildings.

AREA 9

Block bound by Washington and Adams Avenues, Second and Third Streets

- Area immediately adjacent to Fletcher-Switzer residence, commercial and residential area: dugout sites, livery stable site, former post office/emporium/garage and living quarters sites on Fletcher-Switzer property [property appears on all maps]; northeast corner of area may reveal evidence of commercial/residential use.

AREA 10

Block bound by Washington and Adams Avenues, Third and Fourth Streets

- Henries merchandise store, commercial building [property appears in 1879–1888]; middle of northern half of area, adjacent to Washington Avenue.

AREA 11

Block bound by Washington and Adams Avenues, Fourth and Seventh Streets

- Sayers residence, includes dwelling [property appears 1888–1930]; southwest corner of area.
- Mathew dugout, including residence [property appears 1888–1930]; central southern portion of area.
- Napue residence, includes dwelling [property appears 1945–1956]; northwest corner of area.
- D.L. Stewart House site.
- Potential throughout developed areas around District No. 1 Schoolhouse and Goins/Robinson residence site for testing, former site of Fairview Schoolhouse.
- Nineteenth- or early twentieth-century vegetation may still be extant adjacent to the Mathew dugout site; also older vegetation may be extant along Washington Avenue edge.

AREA 12

Block bound by Adams Avenue and edge of Townsite, First and Fourth Streets

- Testing throughout undeveloped portions of area may reveal more information on settlements patterns, unpaved transportation routes/trails, and reclamation of open land for agriculture.
- Vaughn residence, includes dwelling and unpaved route [property appears 1888–1930]; southern half of area.
- Napue residence, includes dwelling [property appears 1945–1956]; northeast corner of area.
- Lacey residence, includes dwelling [property appears 1888–1930]; northwest corner of area.

AREA 13

Block bound by Madison Avenue and edge of Townsite, Fourth and Fifth Streets

- Potential for miscellaneous outbuildings.

AREA 14

Block bound by Madison and Jackson Avenues, Fifth and Seventh Streets

- Lacey residence, includes dwelling [property appears 1879–1888], northern half of area.

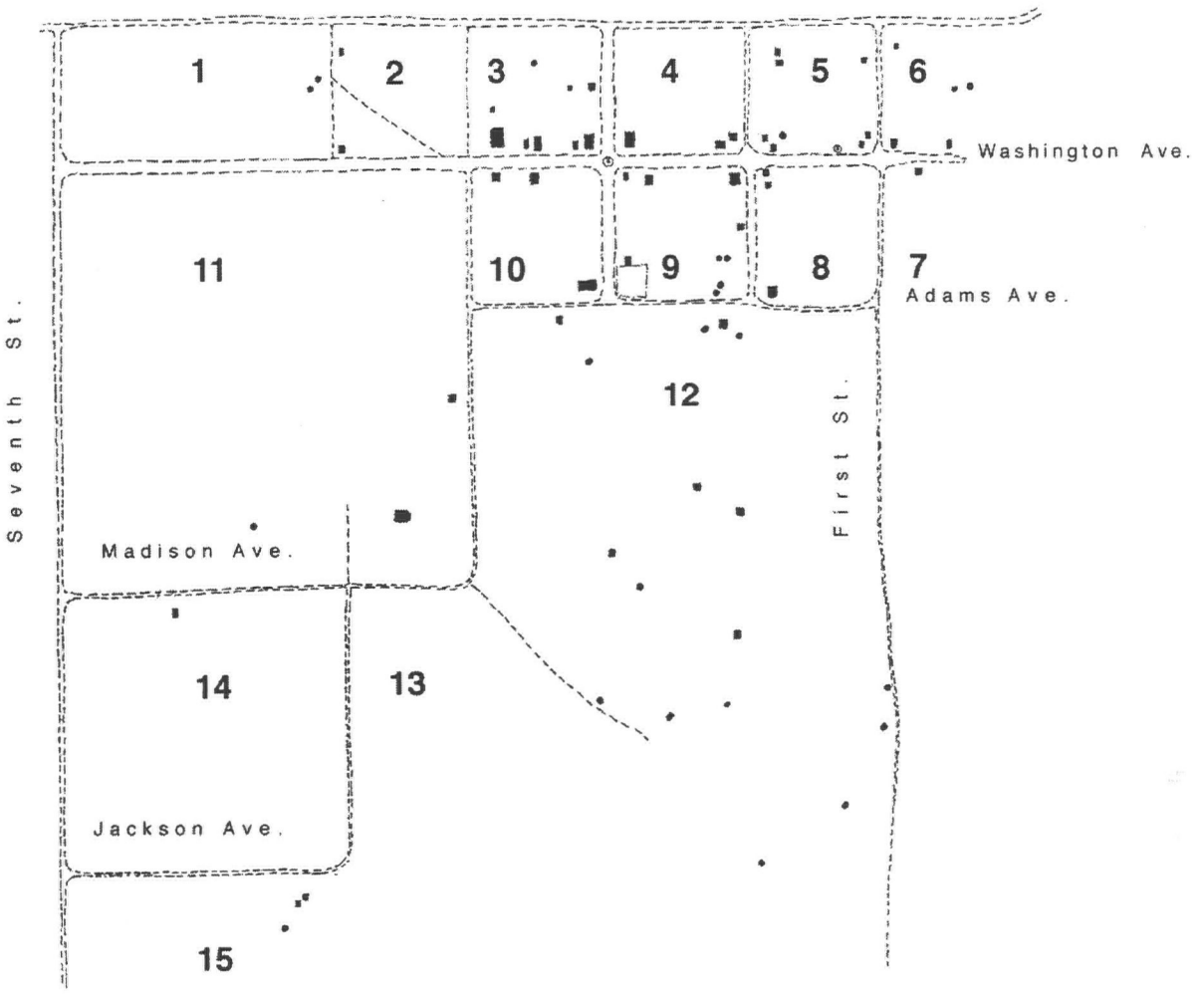
AREA 15

Block bound by Jackson Avenue and edge of Townsite, Fifth and Seventh Streets

- Reverend Smith residence, includes dwelling [property appears 1888–1930], northeastern corner of area, testing around tree-covered area.

Other features, former locations not determined:

- Baptist Church Parsonage site.
- former Fairview Schoolhouse site after moved along Washington Avenue.



Map Sources

Photograph: "An early view of Nicodemus, kansas, ca. 1885", (Kansas State Historical Society) and "Nicodemus Kansas, Townsite Plan - Circa 1877–1890" by Historic American Building Survey, National Park Service, from Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas. (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1984); "Topographic, Boundary, Feature Survey-Cultural Landscape Report," from survey dated November 11, 1999 by Forgy Surveying.

Legend

- buildings/structures
- dugout/sod-up
- unpaved roads/lanes
- unpaved paths
- fence
- well
- 1 area

North

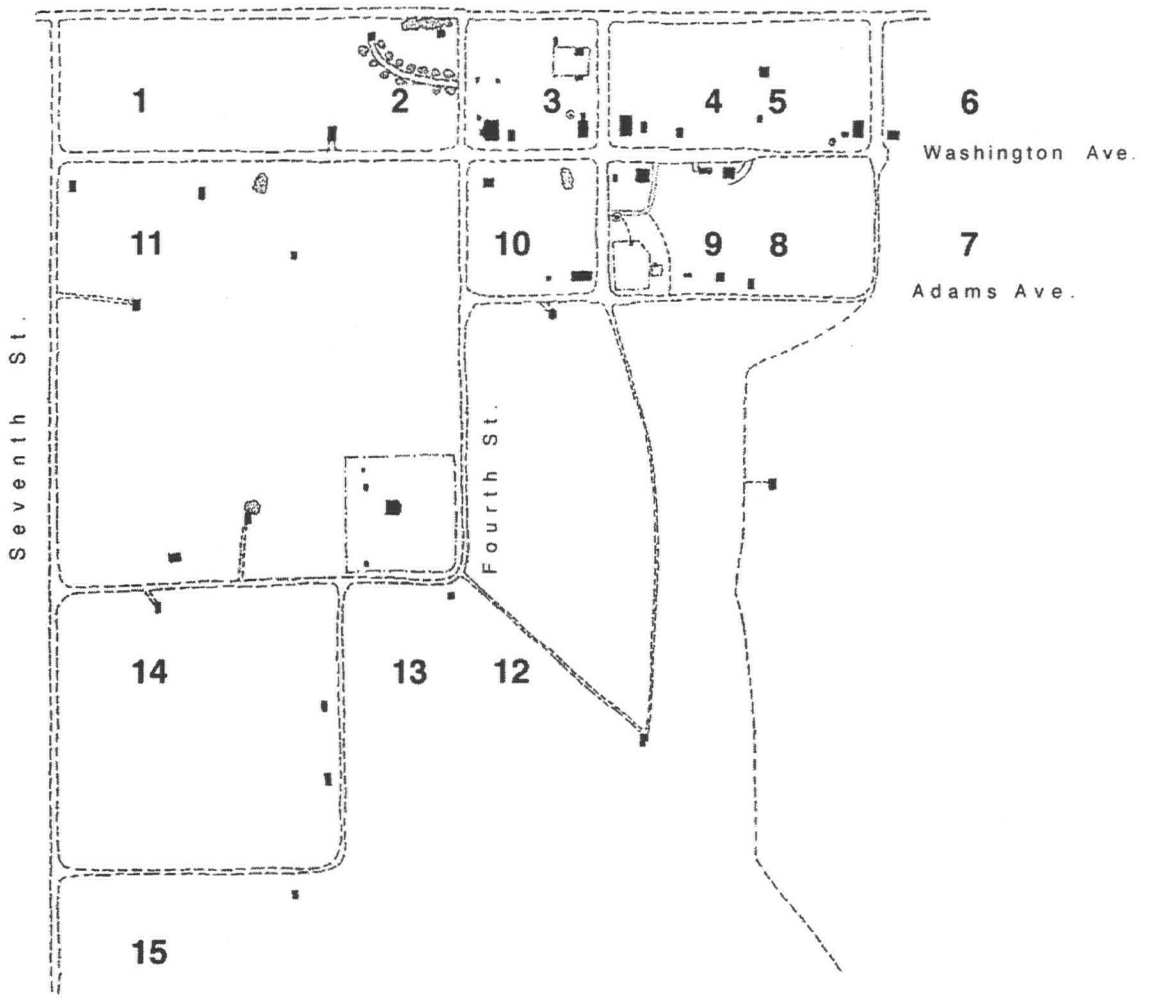
not to scale

Nicodemus National Historic Site

Cultural Landscape Report

Nicodemus Townsite
Potential Archeological Resources
circa 1879–1888

Figure 123.
Townsite archeological potential, features likely extant 1879-1888.



Map Sources

Photograph, "Looking west down Washington Street, 1922" and "Nicodemus Kansas, Townsite Plan - Circa 1920" by Historic American Building Survey, National Park Service, from Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas. (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1984); "Topographic, Boundary, Feature Survey-Cultural Landscape Report," from survey dated November 11, 1999 by Forgy Surveying.

Legend

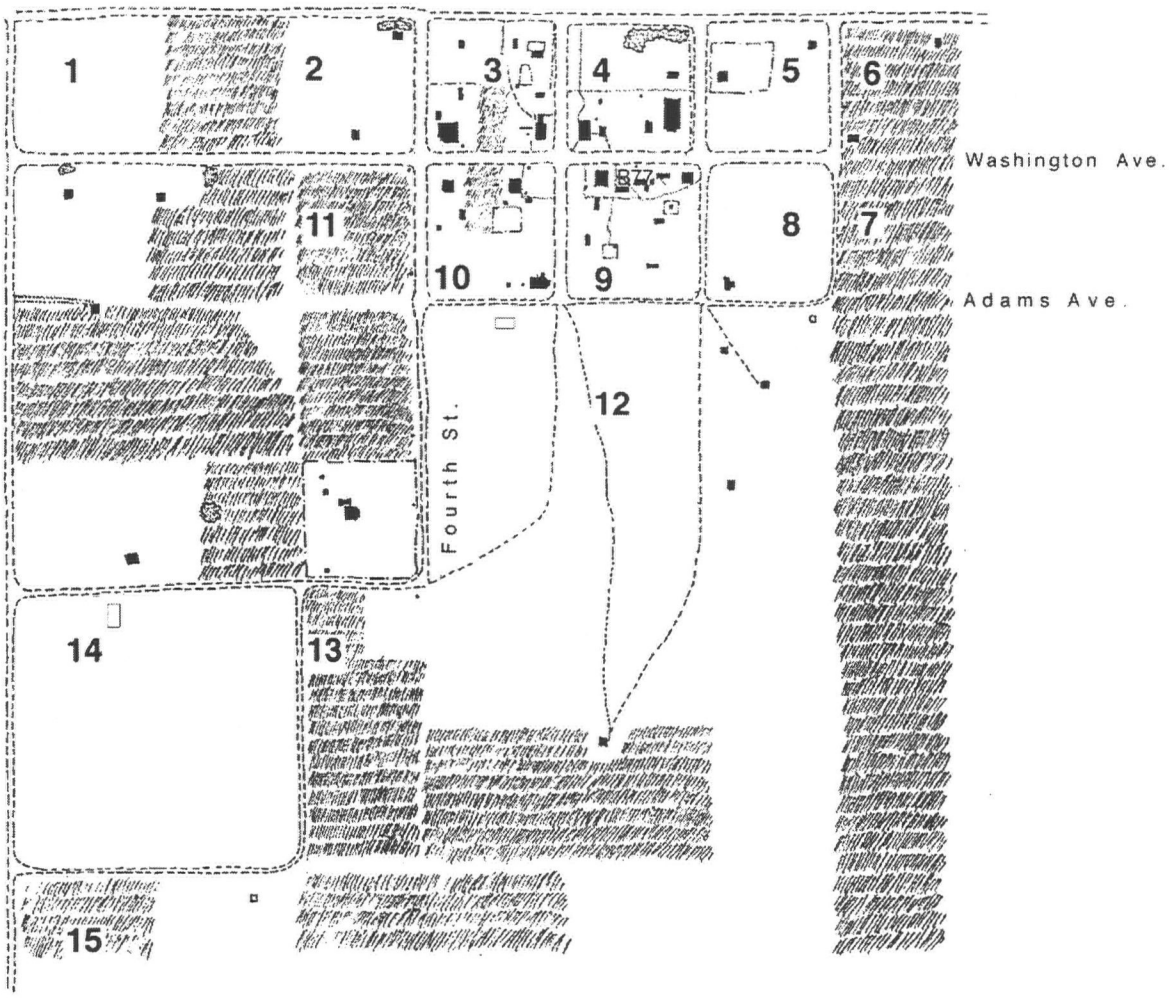
- tree cover
- buildings/structures
- ruin-building/structure
- unpaved roads/lanes
- unpaved paths
- fence
- well
- 1 area

North
not to scale

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

Nicodemus Townsite
Potential Archeological Resources
circa 1888–1930

Figure 124.
Townsite archeological potential, features likely extant 1888-1930.



Map Sources

"Aerial view of Nicodemus, Kansas, 1953" (Photograph: Bernice Bates) and "Nicodemus Kansas, Townsite Plan - Circa 1950" by Historic American Building Survey, National Park Service, from Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas. (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1984); "Topographic, Boundary, Feature Survey-Cultural Landscape Report", from survey dated November 11, 1999 by Forgy Surveying.

Legend

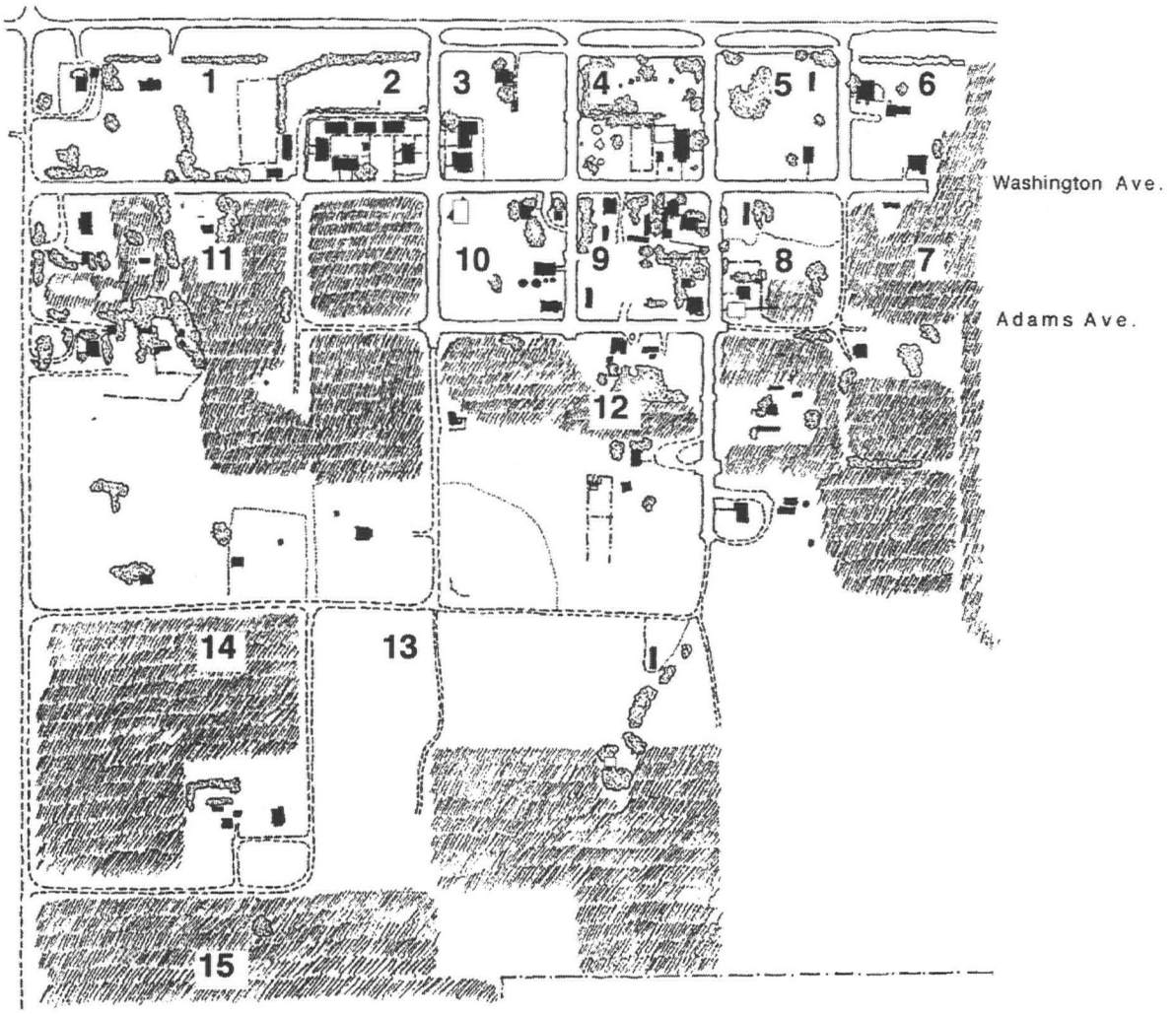
- tree cover
- buildings/structures
- ruin-building/structure
- unpaved roads/lanes
- unpaved paths
- fence
- crop cover/fields
- utility poles
- 1 area

North
not to scale

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

Nicodemus Townsite
Potential Archeological Resources
circa 1945–1956

Figure 125.
Townsite archeological potential, features likely extant 1945-1955.



Map Sources
"Topographic, Boundary, Feature Survey-Cultural Landscape Report," from survey dated November 11, 1999 by Forgy Surveying.

Legend

- tree cover
- buildings/structures
- ruin-building/structure
- paved roads
- unpaved roads/lanes
- unpaved paths
- fence
- crop cover/fields
- 1 area

North
not to scale

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

Nicodemus Townsite
Potential Archeological Resources
circa 1956–1972

Figure 126. Townsite archeological potential. Features likely extant ca. 1956–2002.

Figure 126.
Townsite archeological potential, features likely extant 1956-2002.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE LANDSCAPE

Introduction

This section describes in more detail seven individual properties located within the Nicodemus townsite: 1) A.M.E. Church; 2) Township Hall; 3) District No. 1 Schoolhouse; 4) First Baptist Church; 5) Fletcher-Switzer residence; 6) Roadside Park; and 7) Township Park. The first five of these sites comprise the Nicodemus National Historic Site. The descriptions of the landscapes associated with each of these sites address the nature and configuration of the following landscape characteristics:

- spatial organization;
- current land use;
- circulation patterns and features;
- buildings and structures[17] and structural clusters;
- vegetation;
- small-scale features;
- above-ground utilities (below-ground information if available); and
- views and viewpoints.

An inventory of the landscape features associated with each site follows its description. A labeled site map, representative photographs, and photographic station points information follow each of the property inventories.

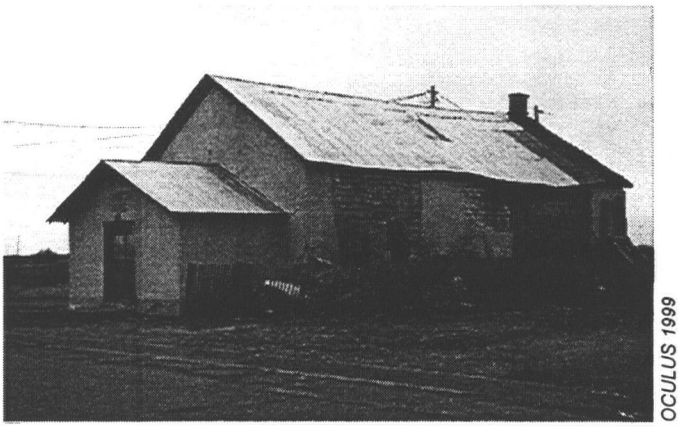
African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church

See figure 127. A.M.E. Church property, photographic station points, and photos 54 through 58.

Currently, the only property within the Nicodemus townsite owned by the Federal Government and administered by the National Park Service (NPS) is the southern, 0.17-acre portion of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church site located at the northwestern corner of the Third Street and Adams Avenue intersection. This parcel is part of a larger one-half acre property included within the NHS enabling legislation boundary. The NHS boundary extends beyond the immediate vicinity of the A.M.E. Church to the north and west, encompassing all of lots 19 through 24 within block 11, and totaling an additional 0.34 acres.

The NPS-administered portion of the site encompasses a single-story church building that sits along the edge of Third Street. The long dimension of the rectangular building parallels Adams Avenue. The church is fronted by a concrete slab stoop at the double-door entrance that faces Third Street. Also along Third Street is a historical marker. Fully one-third of the church building and the historical marker are located in the public right-of-way of Third Street. Overhead power lines and poles edge the building to the south within the Adams Avenue right-of-way. The church is otherwise surrounded by a grassy yard and a small thicket of weedy woody growth. Snow fencing has been used to limit visitor access to the crumbling northern facade of the church, but is to be removed as repairs are made to the building. Stockpiles of building materials once located between the fencing and the church appear to have been removed.

The A.M.E. Church building is currently not in use and is in poor condition. In late 1996, the Southwest Preservation Crew of the NPS performed emergency stabilization work on the structure, including shoring up walls, covering the windows, and adding a temporary metal roof. This one-story structure is built of locally-quarried limestone, which was faced with stucco during the 1940s. The main block of the building has a gable roof clad with sheet metal set over wood shingles which have been partially covered by composition shingles. A simple masonry chimney punctuates the western end of the building. Four large windows are set within the southern façade of the building, which is otherwise windowless. The building foyer/entrance forms a square-plan wing set symmetrically within the eastern end of the



OCULUS 1999

Photo 54.
View southwest towards the A.M.E. Church located at the corner of Third Street and Adams Avenue.

[17] A more complete architectural documentation is included in a Historic Structures Report concurrently being prepared for the Nicodemus NHS.

main block. It, too, has a gable roof of sheet metal. "A.M.E. Church 1885" has been painted on the stucco above the glass double-door entrance. The church is one of the oldest surviving structures within the townsite. It was formally closed for religious services ca. 1947.

The northern portion of the property, which is not under federal ownership, is characterized by a series of corrugated metal agricultural storage buildings, including four grain bins—two large and two small—and a Butler building. These sit in a line paralleling the long dimension of the church building to its north, with the two smaller bins sitting in front of, and closer to Third Street, the larger bins. The metal Butler building faces Third Street with its long dimension sitting parallel to the grain bins. The remainder of the property is generally open and maintained as a grassy yard, allowing unimpeded views to and from the church. A small thicket of weedy woody growth occupies the area between the church building and the grain bins, and also edges some of the bins.

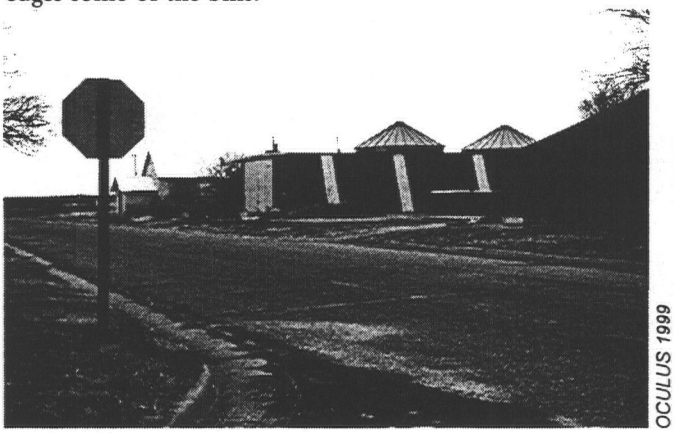


Photo 55.
View towards the A.M.E. Church and the agricultural support buildings located to its north.

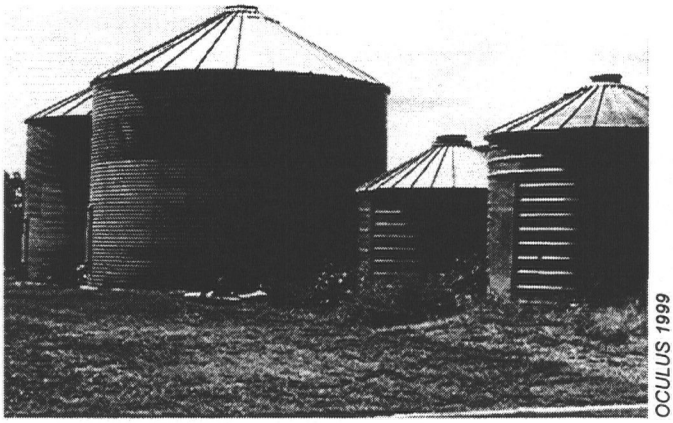


Photo 56.
View of the metal grain bins to the north of the church.

INVENTORY OF A.M.E. CHURCH LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Buildings and Structures

- African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church
- metal "Butler" building
- four metal grain bins, two large, two small

Circulation

- concrete stoop at building entrance
- Adams Avenue and Third Street edging the site, both asphalt paved with concrete curb and gutter systems

Vegetation

- grassy yard over the majority of the property
- grassy field
- weedy woody vegetation between church building and grain bins and around metal outbuildings

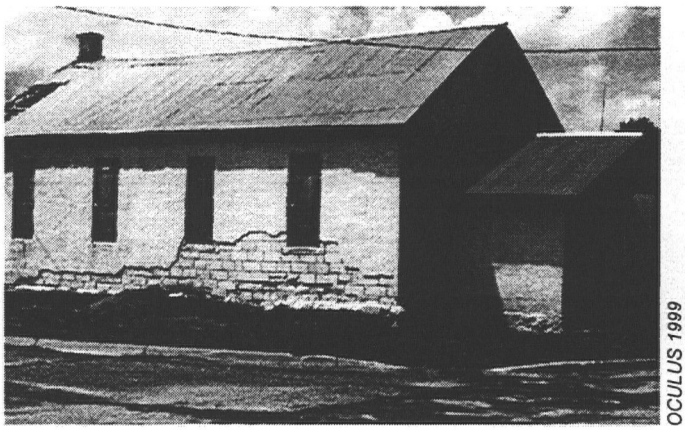


Photo 57.
View of the church from the south.

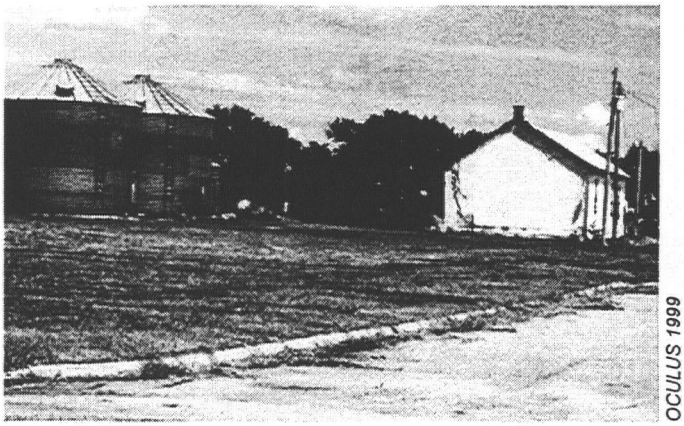


Photo 58.
View of the A.M.E. Church and agricultural support buildings from the corner of Fourth Street and Adams Avenue.

Small-scale Features

- historical marker at edge of Third Street
- yield sign at corner of Adams Avenue and Third Street

Utilities

- overhead power lines and poles to the south of the church building along Adams Avenue

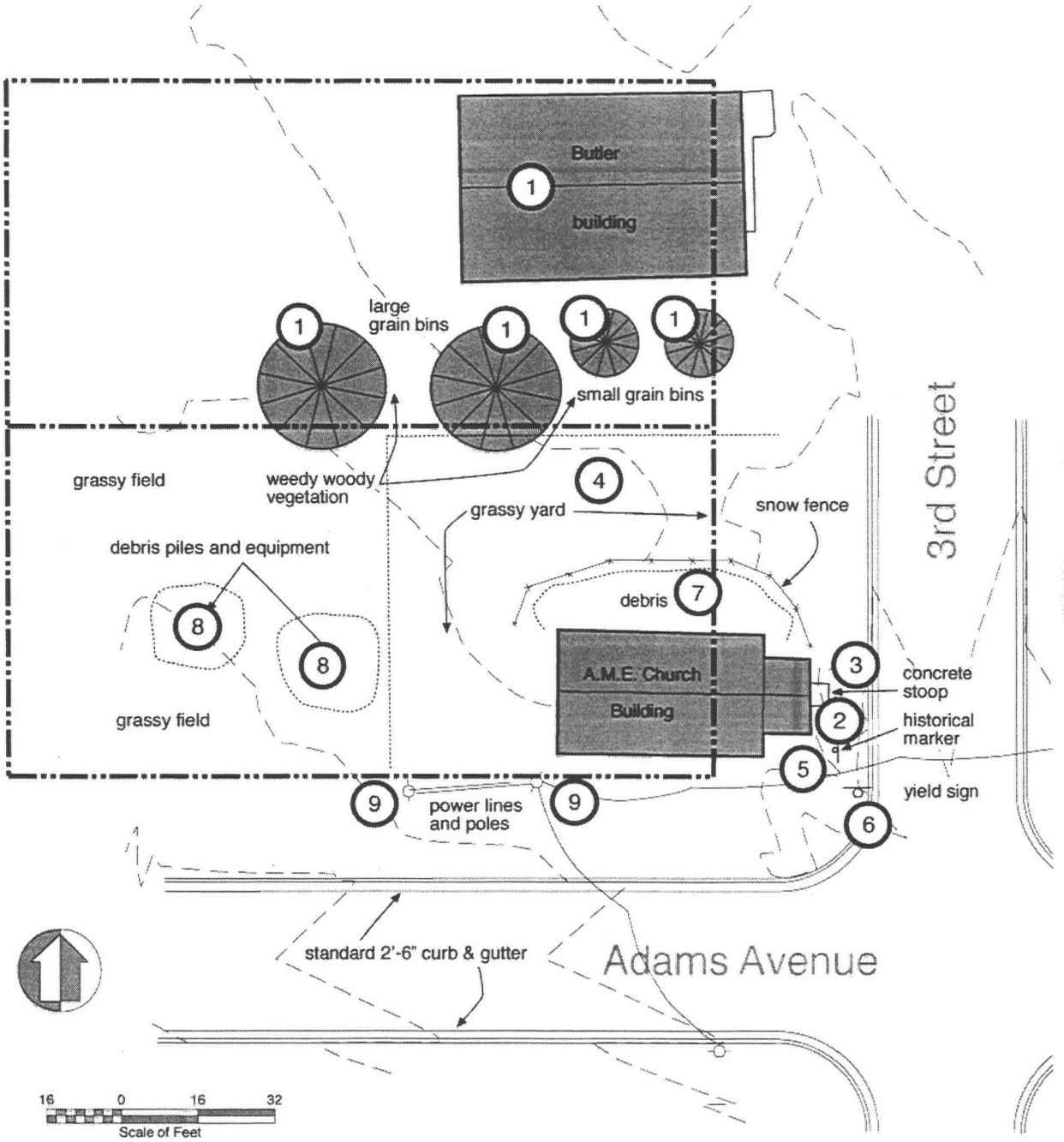


Figure 127.
A.M.E. Church property and photographic station points map, 2000.

Township Hall

See figure 128. Township Hall, Township Park, Roadside Park properties, photographic station points.

The Township Hall parcel is approximately 0.75 acre in size and is located at the northwestern corner of the intersection of Second Street and Washington Avenue. This building serves as the primary meeting location for the locally elected Township officials, and is owned by the Township. In June 1998, the NPS began renting space within the building, which it uses as a visitor contact facility. The parcel includes lots 17 through 24 within block 3. Features associated with the parcel include the limestone institutional Township Hall *(Photos 59 and 60)*; a smaller structure referred to as the Priscilla Art Club that supports community activities; recreational facilities; ornamental plantings and lawn; site furnishings; and signage.

The Township Hall building is set back slightly from both adjacent roadways on a relatively level parcel. The building's main entrance faces Washington Avenue, and the long dimension of the rectangular building parallels Second Street. Built in 1939 by the Work Projects Administration (WPA), the building is comprised of locally quarried limestone that is a warm yellow color, on a concrete foundation. Like the A.M.E. Church, the one-story building is composed of a primary block edged by a smaller and lower entrance block. Both blocks have gable roofs composed of structural steel covered by red asphalt shingles. There are no gutters on the building. A brick chimney emerges from the eastern side of the pitched portion of the roof. The eastern façade is marked by five tall and narrow windows, and a sixth smaller window toward the rear. The southern facade, which is also the main entrance of the building, is marked by double glass entrance doors edged on either side by single windows.

Shade trees—five Siberian elms *(Ulmus occidentalis)*—line the building along Second Street, flank the entrance at Washington Avenue, and sit between the Township Hall and the Priscilla Art Club. These trees are generally in poor condition. Lines of smaller trees, including honey locust, ash, and American elm edge the northern property boundary behind the tennis/basketball court, and the western property boundary alongside the Township Park. Much of the remainder of the property is maintained in grassy lawn.

A concrete sidewalk leads straight to the Township Hall entrance from Washington Avenue. A wooden sign indicating use of the Township Hall as a NPS Visitor Center sits to the east of the walk *(Photo 61)*. Two wood slat and steel benches edge the walk. Evergreen shrubs (junipers) and trees (arborvitae) flank the entrance to either side. East of the walk are a flagpole, a light post, and a picnic table with metal benches set on a concrete slab. There is a mailbox located along Second Street. To the west of the walk are a water fountain and another picnic table with benches. At the back of the building there is an additional cluster of benches, an associated trash receptacle, and a propane tank.

The alley right-of-way behind the building appears to provide infrequent vehicular access to the site. Associated with the access road is a lightly graveled parking area



OCULUS 1999

Photo 59.
View northeast toward the Township Hall complex from Third Street. The Priscilla Art Club building is visible in front of the Township Hall.



OCULUS 1999

Photo 60.
View northwest toward the Township Hall from the intersection of Second Street and Washington Avenue.

edged by remnant wood posts. There were once bathrooms located to the rear of the building just south of the existing evergreen trees. These were removed in 1995. Much of the remainder of the site is maintained as closely mown grassy lawn.

Northwest of the Township Hall, the property features a basketball court that abuts the building, a well, propane tank, A/C units, the above-mentioned Siberian elm, lawn, and a small clapboard structure, known as the Priscilla Art Club, that is used for community activities. The Pricilla Art Club is a small, one-room wood frame building with wood clapboard siding and a gable roof clad with asphalt shingles. The main entrance faces south towards Washington Avenue. The door is located on the left side of the southern façade. A single window offsets the door on the right side. Access to the Priscilla Art Club building occurs via a concrete walk leading from Washington Avenue to a short flight of concrete steps and the entrance door *(Photo 62).*

Behind these features to the west is the asphalt tennis/basketball court enclosed within a perimeter chain link fence described earlier. Overhead lights are associated with the court for night play. The Township Hall property abuts a privately-owned parcel to the west, and the Roadside Park, which encompasses the entire northern portion of the block. These two sites are addressed in more detail following the inventory of landscape features associated with Township Hall.

INVENTORY OF TOWNSHIP HALL LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Buildings and Structures

- Township Hall
- Priscilla Art Club

Circulation

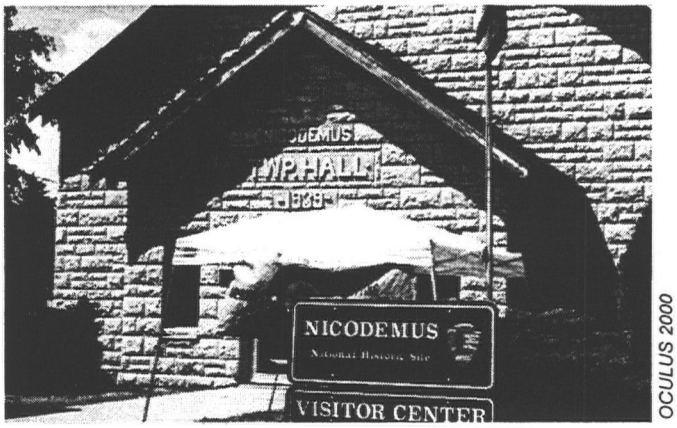
- concrete sidewalks accessing the Township Hall
- concrete walk and steps accessing Priscilla Art Club
- gravel parking area edged by remnant wood posts
- grass-surfaced alley
- Washington Avenue and Second Street fronting site, asphalt paved with concrete curb and gutter system

Vegetation

- grassy lawn, closely mown
- Siberian elm trees
- shade and ornamental trees
- pair of arborvitae shrubs flanking main entrance of Township Hall
- pair of low spreading juniper shrubs flanking main entrance of Township Hall

Small-scale Features

- wood and metal benches with backs at front walk, along eastern side of building
- wood and metal benches without backs on concrete slab at southeast corner of building



OCULUS 2000

Photo 61.
The National Park Service maintains a visitor center within the Township Hall building.

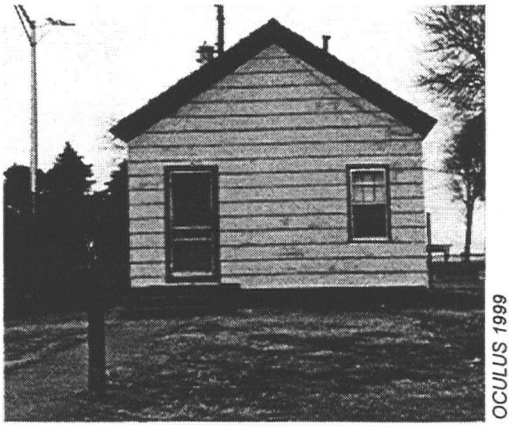

OCULUS 1999

Photo 62.
The Priscilla Art Club building sits adjacent to the Township Hall facing Washington Avenue.

- wood picnic tables with benches on west side of concrete walk accessing the Township Hall
- cast-concrete water fountain
- USPS standard metal mailbox on decorative wood post along Second Street
- painted metal propane tanks
- well
- basketball court with metal backboards/hoops
- trash receptacles
- overhead lights mounted on metal poles at tennis courts
- light post with "historic" copper fixture outside Township Hall
- chain link fencing
- tennis courts with chain link fencing and metal basketball backboards and hoops
- metal flagpole at the front of the Township Hall
- NPS Visitor Center sign
- stop sign
- handicapped parking sign

Utilities

- overhead power lines and pole on Washington Avenue and behind the Priscilla Art Club
- propane tanks behind the Township Hall and Priscilla Art Club
- well

Township Park

This park site is located west of the Township Hall property and its associated tennis/basketball court. The property is approximately 0.18 acre in size and occupies lots 13 and 14 of block 3, northeast of the intersection of Third Street and Washington Avenue. The relatively level site is associated primarily with a collection of playground equipment (*Photo 64*) lining Third Street. The playground equipment includes a slide, teeter-totter, swings, jungle gym, and merry-go-round. Painted wood benches set in concrete pads edge the playground equipment area to the south. Also located on the property are tree and shrub plantings and grass lawn. Electrical lines traverse the site. A monument honoring the former site of the Masonic Hall is sited near the corner of Third Street and Washington Avenue (*Photo 63*). The monument was erected in 1972 by the Masons. The monument is composed of a low brick wall edged by a concrete pad. Three carved stones are set within the face of the brick wall, and a tablet is set on top of the wall. Viewing the front of the monument, which faces Washington Avenue, the left hand stone is carved with the letter "G." The semicircular middle stone is carved with a half moon with a face in profile and "AF & A.M. 1893." The right hand stone is carved with "1880." The stone tablet includes the Masonic symbol, and describes the history of the Masonic Lodge that formerly stood in this location. Just north of the parcel is an alley. A line of evergreen trees edges the alley that marks the property boundary. The Nicodemus Township Board administers the park site.

INVENTORY OF TOWNSHIP PARK LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Vegetation

- grassy lawn, closely mown
- grass within playground safety zones
- deciduous trees lining Third Street, the alley, and the eastern edge of the park
- evergreen windbreak along northern edge of the park
- low spreading juniper shrubs at Masonic Hall monument

Small-scale Features

- playground equipment, teeter-totter, galvanized metal
- playground equipment, swing set, galvanized metal
- playground equipment, jungle gym, galvanized metal
- playground equipment, slides, painted metal
- playground equipment, merry-go-round, painted and galvanized metal
- wood benches set in concrete slabs
- Masonic Hall commemorative monument, brick wall with engraved stone or cast concrete commemorative panels on concrete slab, engraved stone marker mounted on brick wall
- wood timbers edging margins of playground equipment

Utilities

- overhead power lines and poles

Roadside Park

This 1.1 acre park, administered by the Township since the 1980s, is located south of South Street between Second and Third Streets. It occupies lots 1 through 12 of block 3, north of Township Hall and the Township Park. The site includes scattered plantings of ornamental trees and shrubs, rows of evergreen trees, shade trees, and a large expanse of grassy lawn. The park also includes three historical signs and monuments—the NPS identity sign, a historical marker erected by the Kansas State Historical Society, and a sign indicating the town's National Historic Landmark designation. These face South Street in the northern half of the park. The NPS sign identifying the location of the Nicodemus NHS is a routed wooden sign set on a single metal post. It sits adjacent to the wooden State of Kansas Historical Marker detailing the history of the Nicodemus settlement (*Photo 66*). Further to the east is a small bronze plaque set on two long, thin, metal posts erected in 1976 to indicate the townsite's designation as a NHL (*Photo 68*). The park also includes picnic shelters (*Photo 67*), composed of wood posts supporting corrugated green plastic roofs set atop concrete pads; scattered picnic tables and benches; a concrete and metal grill; and a metal hand pump for water. Overhead power lines and poles cross the park, there are dusk to dawn lights scattered in the park, and there is a Travelers' Information Radio System transmitter and antenna located on the power pole adjacent to Second Street.

A tightly planted row of Eastern red cedar trees edges the park to the west along Third Street *(Photo 65)*. Ornamental and shade trees, including ash, American elm, and honey locust, and ornamental shrubs, such as lilac and juniper, dot the park and form a loose edge along South Street. A dense row of cedars and pines edge the alley to the south of Roadside Park. Many of the trees and shrubs associated with the park are said to have been planted as a "4H project by the town's children during the 1930s."[18]

INVENTORY OF ROADSIDE PARK LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Buildings and Structures

- picnic shelters, corrugated plastic roofing over concrete slabs with wooden posts

Circulation

- grass-surfaced alley
- South Street, Second and Third Streets edging site, asphalt paved with concrete curb and gutter system

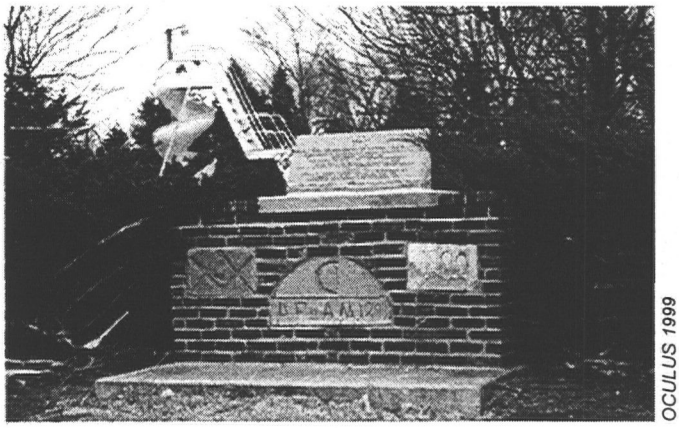


Photo 63.
View northeast of the Masonic Hall monument located within the Township Park. Park playground equipment is visible in the background (*see Photo 64*).

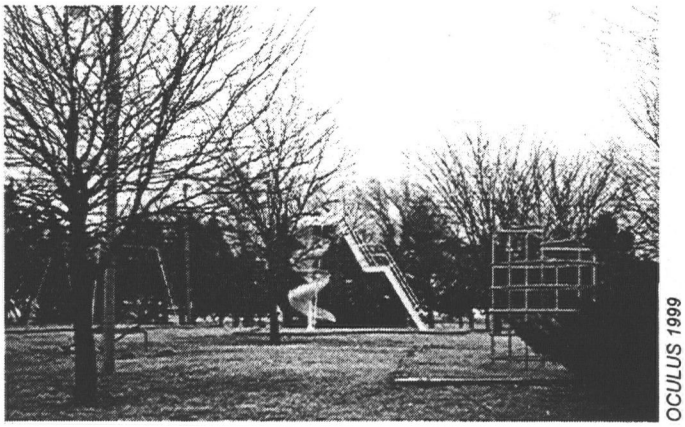


Photo 64.
View east toward playground equipment located within Township Park at the intersection of Third Street and Washington Avenue. (The Roadside Park is located behind the Township Park to the north.)

[18] Angela Bates-Tompkins, "New Promise for Nicodemus, One of the First Black Pioneer Communities Established After the Civil War May Soon Become Part of the National Park System," *National Parks*, July/August, 1992, 46.

Vegetation

- grassy lawn, closely mown
- deciduous shade trees
- ornamental trees and shrubs
- densely planted lines of evergreen trees along the alley and Third Street

Small-scale Features

- three historical markers
- picnic tables and benches
- informational, directional, regulatory signs
- water pump
- grill

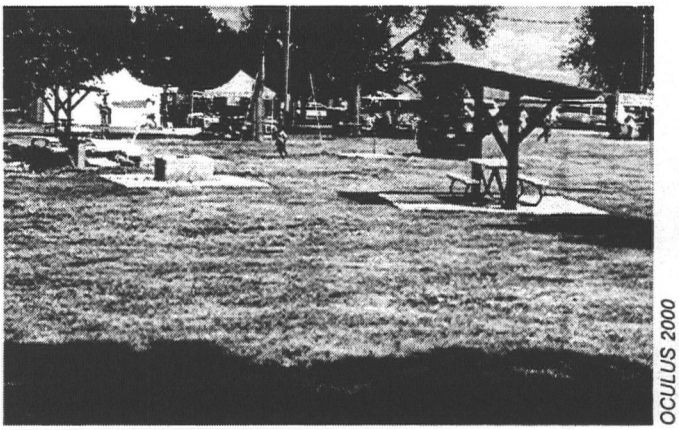
Utilities

- overhead power lines and poles (pole adjacent to Second Street includes a transmitter and antenna for the NPS-operated "Travelers' Information Radio System")
- telephone riser
- "dusk to dawn" lights
- water pump (associated with a well)



OCULUS 2000

Photo 66.
The Roadside Park includes grassy lawn, ornamental and shade trees, informational and historical signs (shown here), and picnic shelters and tables.



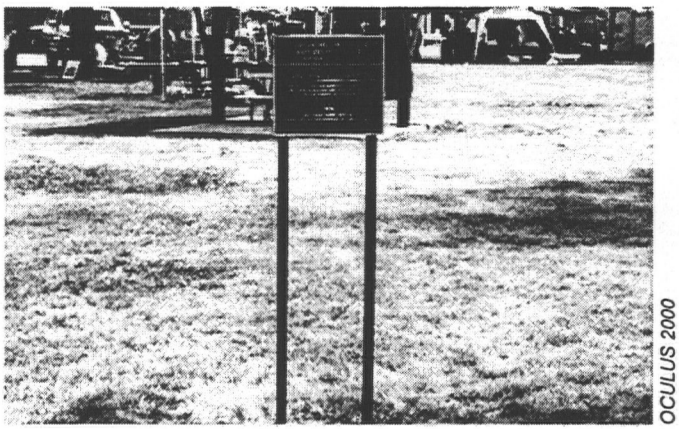
OCULUS 2000

Photo 67.
Picnic shelters are one of the features of the Roadside Park.



OCULUS 2000

Photo 65.
Lines of evergreen trees edge the Roadside Park to the west (shown) and also to the south.



OCULUS 2000

Photo 68.
This sign describes the townsite's National Historic Landmark designation.

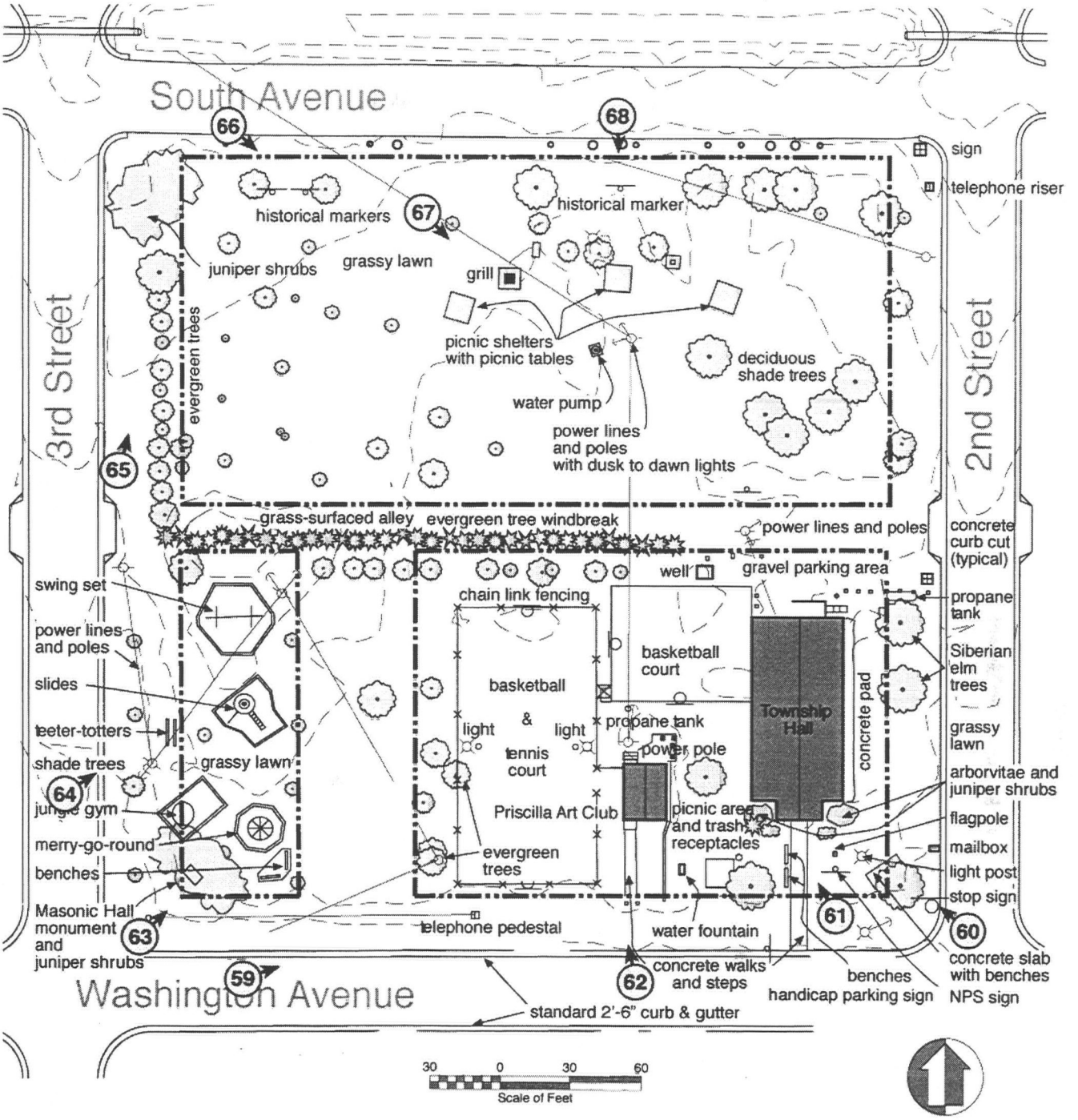


Figure 128.
Township Hall, Township Park, and Roadside Park properties, and photographic station points map, 2000.

District No. 1 Schoolhouse

See figure 129. District No. 1 Schoolhouse property, photographic station points.

The Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse property is approximately 2.33 acres in size. It is located at the northwestern corner of Fourth Street and Madison Avenue, and includes all of block 24 (lots 1 through 24). The schoolhouse was constructed in 1918, but was closed in 1960 when local children began to commute to schools in Bogue and Hill City. The site has a long history of use as a school property. In 1887, the first Nicodemus school was built here. The original structure burned in 1917 and was soon replaced by the existing structure. Another schoolhouse, known as the "Fairview School,"[19] was relocated to the property in 1945, and utilized for additional classroom space as needed. That structure was moved during the mid-1950s to another location along Washington Avenue by the local American Legion Post. The Fairview Schoolhouse building no longer stands. The organization used the building to host their events and activities. Between 1955 and 1983, the District No. 1 Schoolhouse building was utilized by the local 4H club, after which time it, too, was purchased by the American Legion Post for use as an event and meeting facility.

The District No. 1 Schoolhouse property is relatively level but slopes slightly from west to east. Landscape features currently associated with site include the frame schoolhouse structure (*Photos 69 and 70*), a large expanse of fairly open grassy yard, a wooden shed, playground equipment including a metal jungle gym, wood timber play structure, and metal swing/slide, the remains of a privy, a propane tank, a well with a wooden cover, a white sign mounted on a single wooden pole indicating the historic role of the school, and electrical lines. The wooden shed, which may have been used to store coal for use in heating the Schoolhouse, is a small frame structure with a gable roof that sits to the northwest of the schoolhouse building. To the west of the Schoolhouse are the remains of an outhouse structure. The remains consist of a concrete toilet foundation. To the southeast of the Schoolhouse is a well with a large concrete cap and a wooden cover, a metal propane tank, and in the southeastern corner of the parcel a second concrete toilet foundation and hole. There are currently no visible circulation features associated with the site except for a grass-surfaced vehicle track providing access to the front of the schoolhouse building from Fourth Street. A pile of limestone blocks sits along the northwestern edge of the parcel. These stones are all that survive from the demolition of a privy structure that was formerly located within Roadside Park.

The frame schoolhouse building faces east towards Fourth Street. It is comprised of a single block, square in plan, with a hipped shingle roof. One gable window and a central masonry chimney punctuate the roof. The building also includes an attached open porch along its eastern and main façade that is supported by thin columns. Behind the porch, the building's eastern façade includes a central door edged to either side by a single window. The building's southern façade includes one double window. The northern façade includes a row of windows. There are no windows on the western façade of the building.



Photo 69.
View towards the District No. 1 Schoolhouse from Fourth Street. The site includes the shed structure to the right and the play equipment and propane tank to the left of the Schoolhouse.

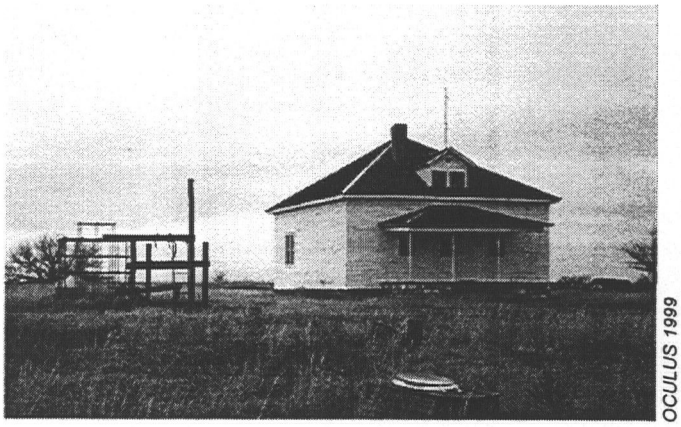


Photo 70.
View west towards the Schoolhouse.

[19] See photograph (*figure 26.*) in Chapter Two of the 1915 Fairview School class.

INVENTORY OF DISTRICT NO. 1 SCHOOLHOUSE LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Buildings and Structures

- District No. 1 Schoolhouse
- wood shed
- two privy ruins

Vegetation

- tall grassy field across site
- mown-grass-surfaced vehicle track accessing front of school building
- grass-lined ditches along streets

Small-scale Features

- well with cover
- playground equipment, metal jungle gym
- playground equipment, wood timber play structure
- playground equipment, metal combination swing set/slide
- street signs along Fourth Street
- historical marker/sign
- culverts

Utilities

- well
- propane tank
- overhead power line and pole with light

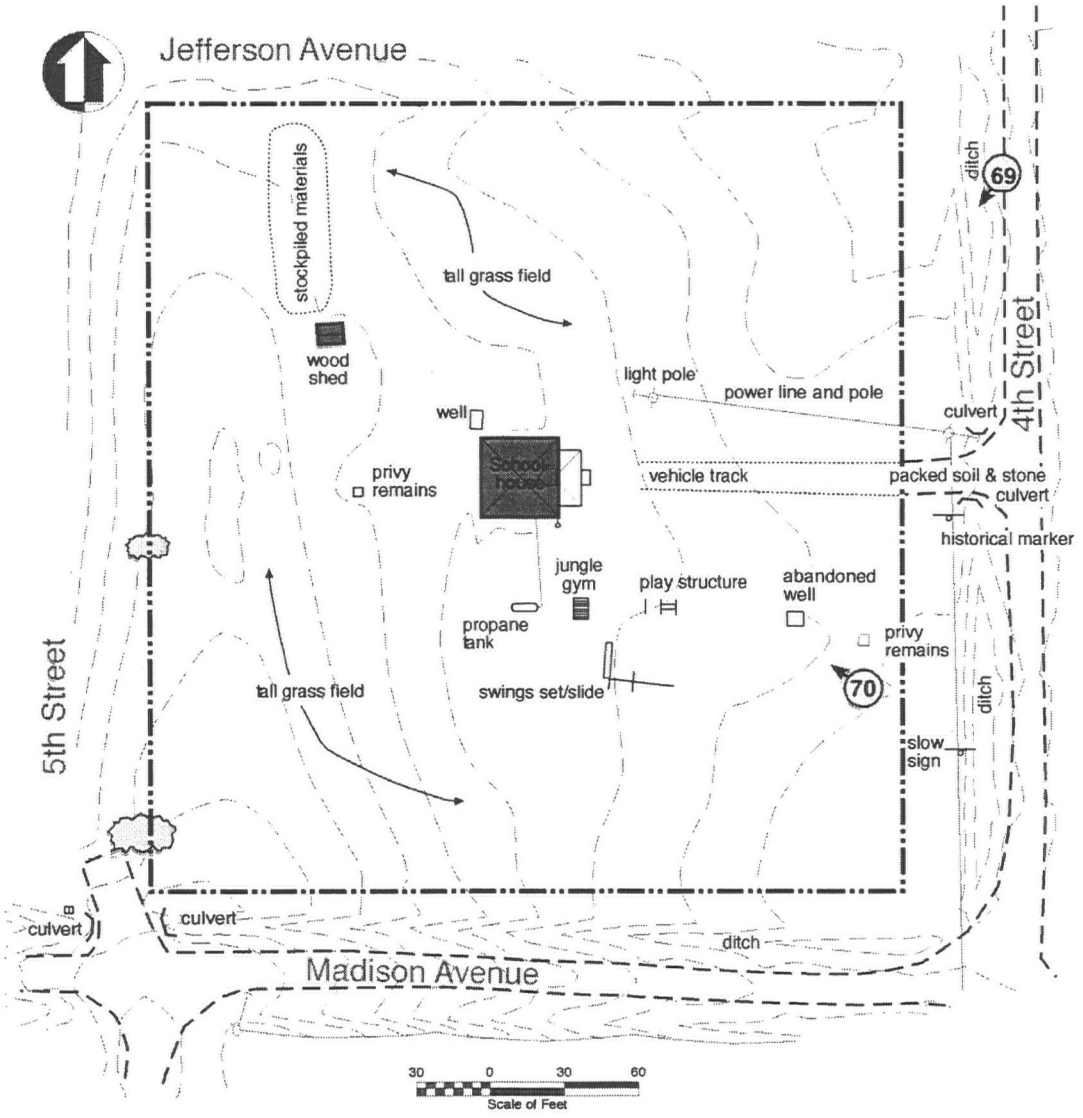


Figure 129. District No. 1 Schoolhouse property and photographic station points map.

First Baptist Church

See figure 130. First Baptist Church property, photographic station points.

The First Baptist Church property is located at the northeastern corner of Fourth Street and Washington Avenue. Approximately 0.17 acre in size, the church property sits within Block 4 and occupies the southern half of lots 13-16. The property is comprised of the church building, a well or cistern with a rusting metal cover, concrete sidewalk and steps, a butane/propane tank, a hackberry tree, and grassy lawn. Overhead power lines and poles edge the property along the Washington Avenue right-of-way, with lines connecting to the church buildings. The church structure faces west toward Fourth Street. Concrete sidewalks and a historical marker sit within the right-of-way of Fourth Street to the west of the church building. A new sanctuary associated with the church is located to the north of the building, but is not included within the property addressed by this study.

Constructed in 1907–1908, the one-story church building is composed of locally quarried limestone clad with stucco, on a concrete foundation. Two later additions are composed of masonry block clad with stucco. The gable roof of the original church building is composed of wood shingles on wood framing, while the roofs of the additions are clad with rolled asphalt. The building includes a brick chimney, the remains of a bell tower, and buttresses along the eastern façade. The main block of the building is rectangular, with the long dimension edging Fourth Street. The northern, eastern, and southern faces of the main block each include two windows set symmetrically within the façade. A circa 1920 addition edges the main block to the west and includes a foyer, porch, and kitchen. The entrance is marked by wood frame doors set with a round arch over the doorway. A 1967 addition edges the kitchen wing to the north, and includes a study and two restrooms. The well or cistern is located to the east of the church building.

The relatively level and open lot is primarily maintained in closely mown grassy lawn. A hackberry tree is growing right up against the church building at its northeastern corner. There is also a rose shrub located near the entrance, which is accessed via a concrete walk and a set of steps leading into the site from a sidewalk edging Fourth Street. A non-functional hand pump for water is located along the side of the building.

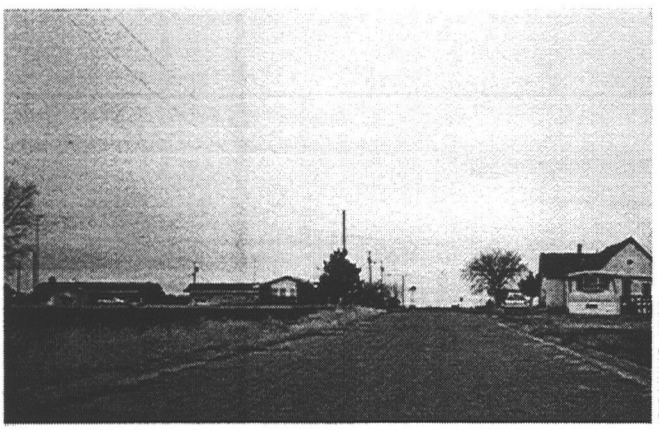


Photo 71.
View along Fourth Street towards the First Baptist Church (located to the right)

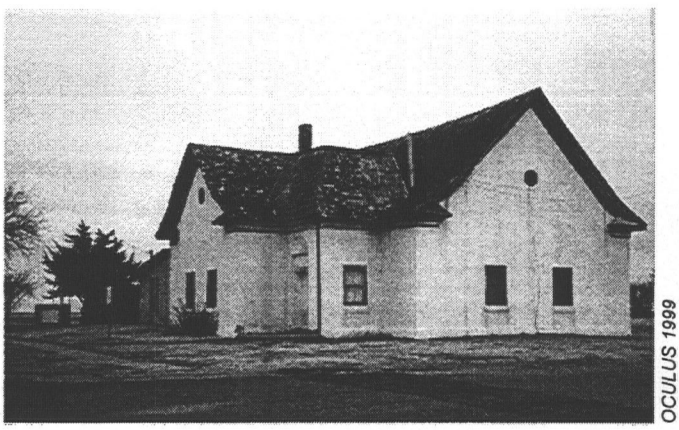


Photo 72.
View northeast towards the First Baptist Church from Fourth Street.

INVENTORY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Buildings and Structures

- First Baptist Church

Circulation

- concrete sidewalk and ramp fronting Fourth Street
- concrete stoop at building entrance

Vegetation

- grassy lawn, closely mown
- rose shrub at front of building
- hackberry tree at rear of building

Small-scale Features

- historical marker/sign at front of building
- metal well or cistern cover

Utilities

- well or cistern
- butane/propane tank
- overhead power line and pole

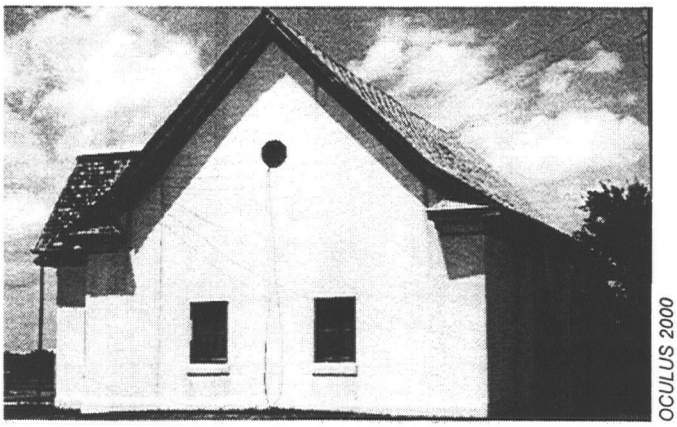


Photo 73.
Side view of the First Baptist Church showing the buttresses.

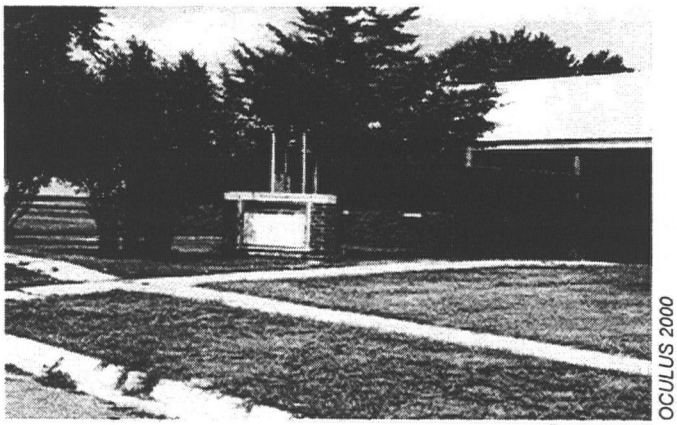


Photo 74.
The First Baptist Church sanctuary, built in the 1980s and shown here, is currently used for all services and congregation activities.

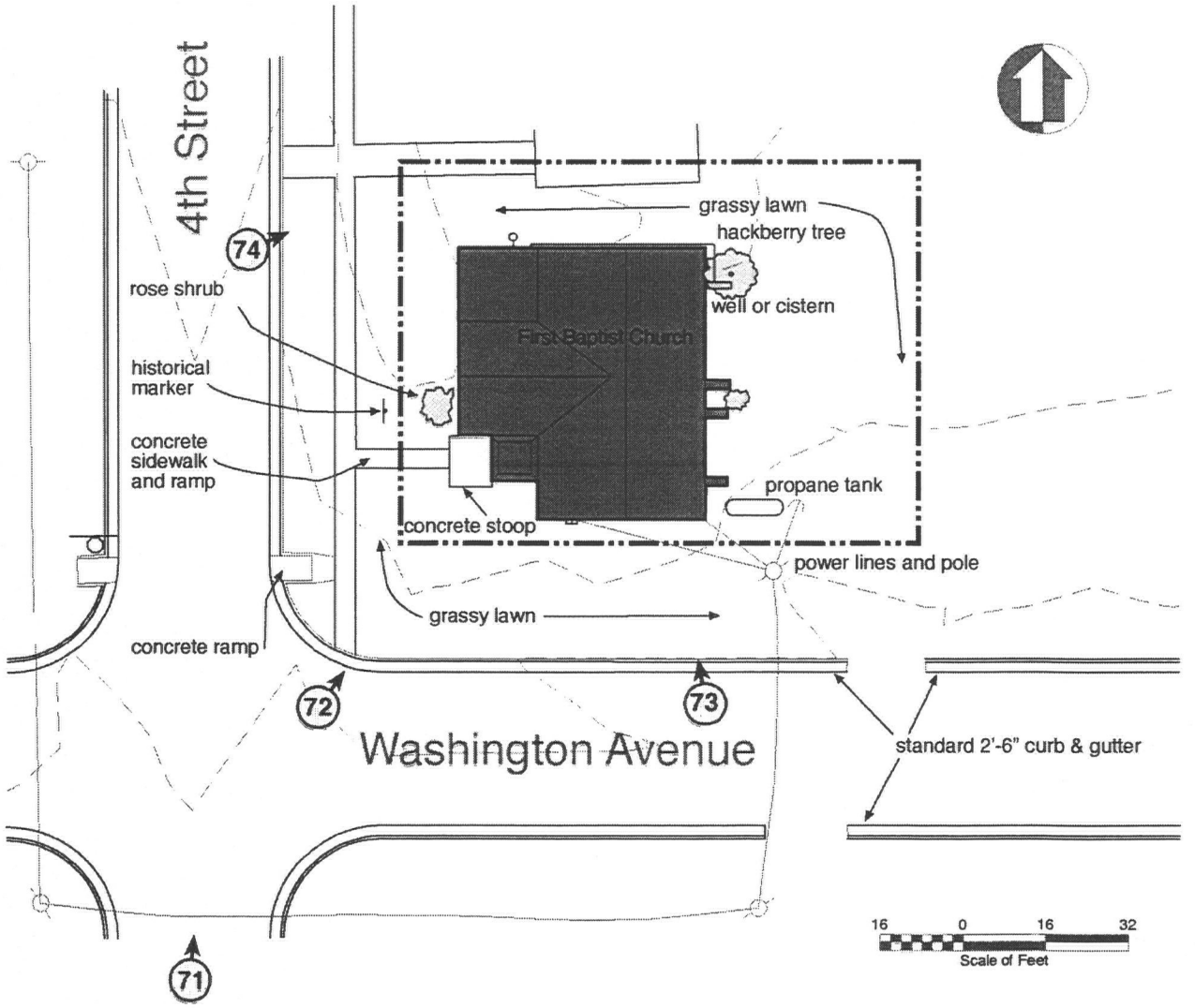


Figure 130.
First Baptist Church property and photographic station points map, 2000.

Fletcher-Switzer Residence/St. Francis Hotel

See figure 131. Fletcher-Switzer residence property, photographic station points.

The Fletcher-Switzer residence, also known as the St. Francis Hotel, is thought to have been constructed circa 1880 by Z.T. Fletcher. Fletcher established a hotel in the structure and later built a stable nearby that is no longer standing. These buildings are thought to have replaced a dugout constructed as early as 1878 on the same property. Variously altered over the years, the Fletcher-Switzer residence sits near the intersection of Third Street and Washington Avenue on lots 7 through 12 within block 12. The portion of the property that is the focus of this study is approximately one-half acre in size. Included within the site are a well structure, propane/butane tank, television and radio antennas, a hedgerow of trees and shrubs along Third Street, other scattered trees and shrubs, lawn, a concrete walk and steps leading to the building from Washington Avenue, a mobile home that straddles the property line, two additional outbuildings, and a hard packed earth access drive leading into the property from Washington Avenue. The house, with a screened porch at the entrance, faces Washington Avenue; a historical marker is sited within the avenue right-of-way nearby, and a portion of the front of the building falls within the right-of-way *(Photos 75, 76, and 79).*

The original residence is constructed of native limestone clad with stucco and aluminum siding. It was a one and one-half story structure, rectangular in plan, with a simple gable roof and the long dimension, and possibly the main entrance, facing west toward Third Street. The roofing is wood frame clad with asphalt shingles. The foundation is constructed of native stone. By the 1930s, various additions had been constructed to enlarge the house. These, composed of both concrete block and frame construction, extended the line of the building to the east and to the northwest. The addition to the east was comprised of a one and one-half story rectangular block, with a gable roof that joined the existing roof perpendicularly. A one-story shed-roof addition was also added to the northwestern half of the structure. Later, another shed-roof addition was added to the building's southwestern corner. By the 1960s, the house had taken on a square form in plan, as the northern and southern additions were extended out from the long sides of the building. The addition along the building's northeastern corner is a screened porch that includes a door facing South Avenue.


OCULUS 1999

Photo 75.
View south towards the Fletcher-Switzer residence, also known as the St. Francis Hotel. The building is located along Washington Avenue near its intersection with Third Street.

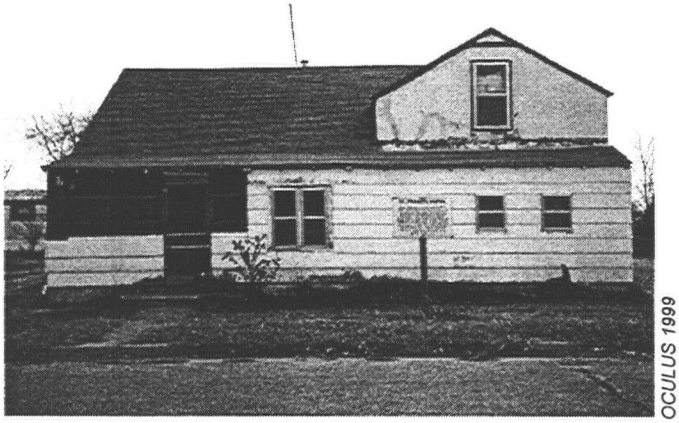

OCULUS 1999

Photo 76.
Close-up view of the front of the hotel facing Washington Avenue. The front-facing, stuccoed gable represents the oldest portion of the building.

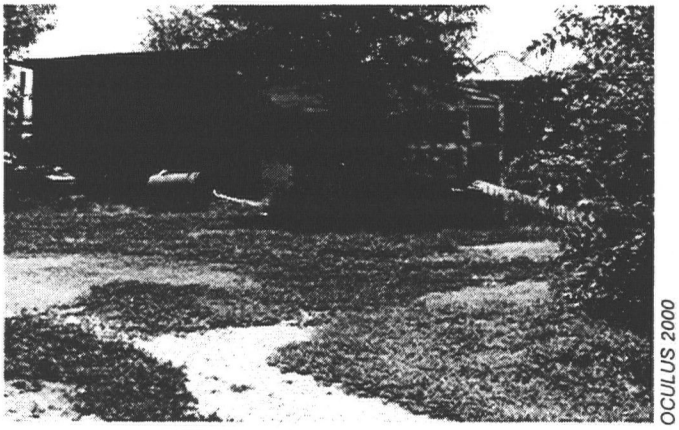

OCULUS 2000

Photo 77.
Two outbuildings are located behind the Fletcher-Switzer residence.

Elsewhere within the property there have been other structures over the years. The original dugout mentioned above was located in the northwestern corner of the property near the intersection of Third Street and Washington Avenue. It was eventually enclosed within a limestone structure and utilized as the town's first post office. The structure was again modified for use as a garage and living quarters during the twentieth century, but was demolished in the 1940s. A cellar also likely existed on the property during the first half of the twentieth century; but it is no longer in evidence. Family members own the remainder of the block on which the Fletcher-Switzer residence is located; there are numerous buildings and structures, access roads, trees and shrubs, and utility features associated with these adjacent lots.

The rear of the building is edged by a line of ten-foot-high shrubs, primarily lilacs *(Photo 78)*. Hackberry trees are also present on the property. The two sheds to the rear of the house sit adjacent to one another *(Photo 77)*. One is a low, single-story clapboard structure with door and window openings. It is painted brown, and has a very slightly pitched roof. The other outbuilding is a white clapboard structure with a pitched roof, and window and door openings. There is debris scattered around the site. There is also a propane tank on the property.

INVENTORY OF FLETCHER-SWITZER RESIDENCE/ST. FRANCIS HOTEL LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Buildings and Structures

- Fletcher-Switzer residence
- mobile home
- two small outbuildings

Circulation

- concrete walk and set of steps leading into building from Washington Avenue
- hard-packed earth access drive from Washington Avenue
- informal area for parking behind residence

Vegetation

- grassy lawn, closely mown
- hedgerow of trees and shrubs
- shade trees
- shrub hedge
- weedy growth around foundation of residence

Utilities

- well or cistern
- butane/propane tanks
- fire hydrant
- overhead power lines and poles, pole with street light

Small-scale Features

- historical marker at front of building
- stop sign at corner of Third Street and Washington Avenue

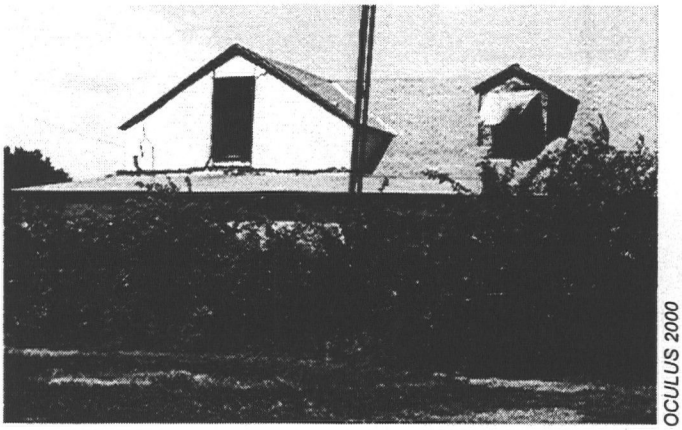


Photo 78.
A rear view of the Fletcher-Switzer residence.

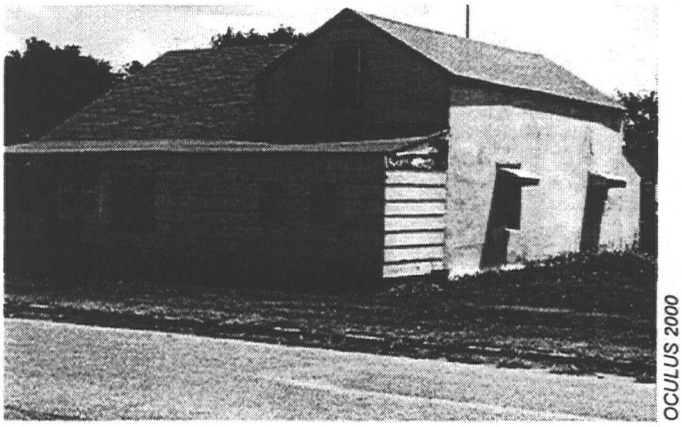


Photo 79.
A side view of the building along Third Street.

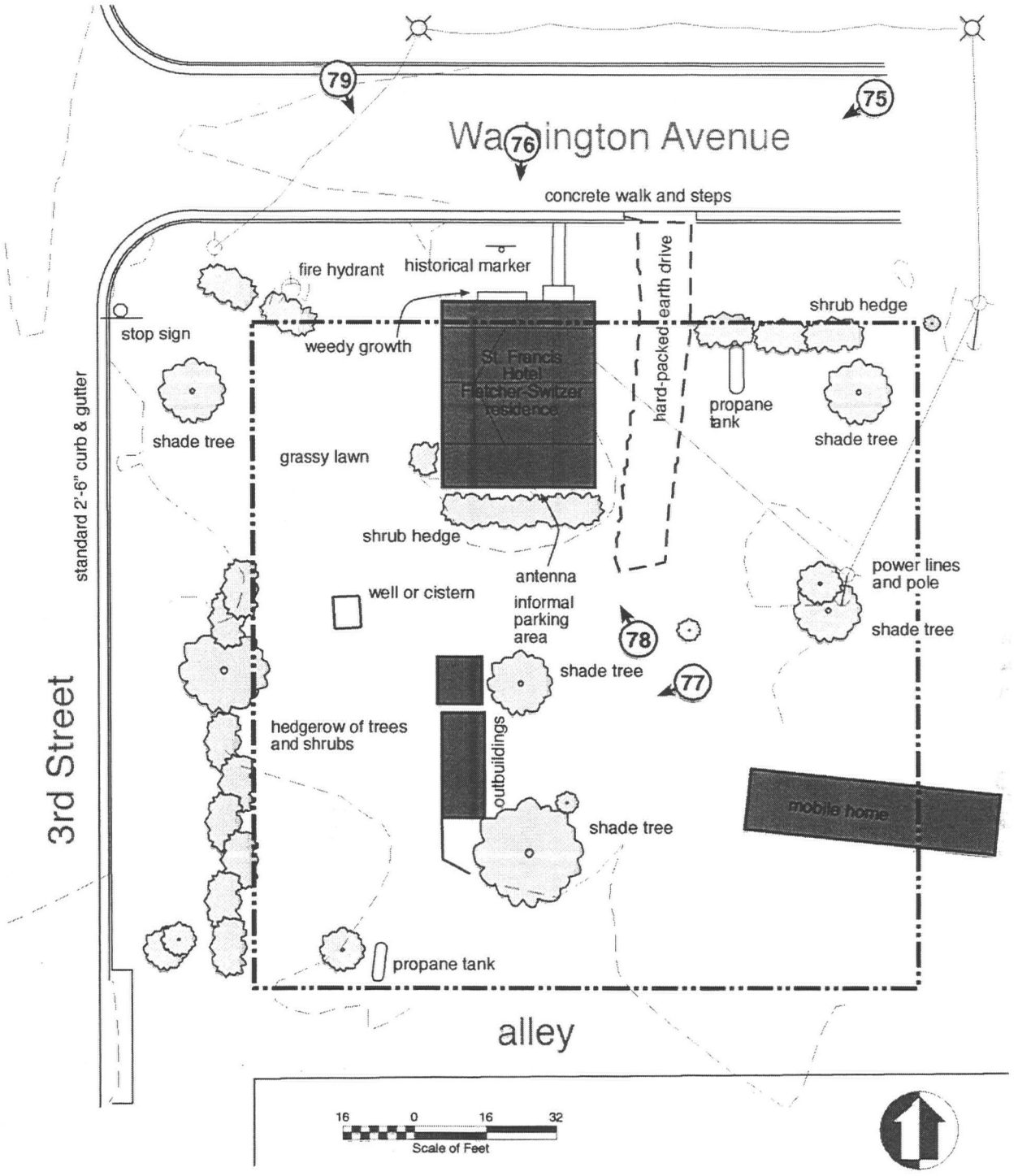


Figure 131.
Fletcher-Switzer residence property and photographic station points map, 2000.

CONDITION ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The condition of the landscape features inventoried within the seven individual sites has been assessed as part of this section. Condition assessments are based on the condition categories defined in the *Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide*: Good, Fair, Poor, and Unknown. The definitions of these categories used in developing assessments are as follows:

- Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions.

- Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

- Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

- Unknown: not enough information is available to make an evaluation.

Condition Assessment

A.M.E. CHURCH

Feature Name	Condition Rating
African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church	Poor
metal "Butler" building	Fair
four metal grain bins, two large, two small	Good
concrete stoop at building entrance	Poor
Adams Avenue and Third Street, asphalt paved, curb and gutter	Good
grassy yard	Poor
grassy field	Poor
weedy woody vegetation	Poor
historical marker at edge of Third Street	Fair
yield sign at corner of Adams Avenue and Third Street	Good
overhead power lines and poles south of the building	Good

TOWNSHIP HALL

Feature Name	Condition Rating
Township Hall	Good
Priscilla Art Club	Good
concrete sidewalks accessing the Township Hall	Fair
concrete walk and steps accessing Priscilla Art Club	Fair
gravel parking area edged by remnant posts	Fair
grass-surfaced alley	Fair
Washington Avenue and Second Street, asphalt paved, curb and gutter	Good
grassy lawn, closely mown	Fair
Siberian elm trees	Poor
shade and ornamental trees	Fair
pair of arborvitae shrubs flanking main entrance of Township Hall	Good
pair of low spreading juniper shrubs flanking main entrance	Good
wood and metal benches with backs at front walk, along east side of bldg.	Good
wood and metal benches without backs on concrete slab	Good
wood picnic tables with benches on west side of concrete walk	Good
cast-concrete water fountain	Good

USPS standard metal mailbox, with decorative wood post	Good
painted metal propane tanks	Good
basketball court with metal backboards/ hoops	Poor
trash receptacles	Fair
overhead lights mounted on metal poles at tennis courts	Good
light post with copper fixture outside Township Hall	Good
chain link fencing	Good
tennis courts with chain link fencing, metal basketball backboards, hoops	Poor
metal flagpole at the front of the Township Hall	Good
NPS Visitor Center sign	Good
stop sign	Good
handicapped parking sign	Good
overhead power lines and poles on Washington Ave., behind Art Club	Good
well	Good

TOWNSHIP PARK

Feature Name	Condition Rating
grassy lawn, closely mown	Fair
grass within playground safety zones	Poor
deciduous trees arranged along Third Street, the alley, eastern edge park	Good
evergreen windbreak along north margins of the park	Fair
low spreading juniper shrubs at Masonic Hall monument	Good
playground equipment, teeter-totter, galvanized metal	Poor
playground equipment, swing set, galvanized metal	Poor
playground equipment, jungle gym, galvanized metal	Poor
playground equipment, slides, painted metal	Poor
playground equipment, merry-go-round, painted and galvanized metal	Poor
wood benches set on concrete pads	Good
Masonic Hall commemorative monument	Fair
wood timbers edging margins of playground equipment	Poor
overhead power lines and poles	Good

ROADSIDE PARK

Feature Name	Condition Rating
picnic shelters, corrugated plastic over concrete pads with wood posts	Fair
grass-surfaced alley	Fair
South Avenue, Second and Third Streets, asphalt paved, curb/gutter	Fair
grassy lawn, closely mown	Good
deciduous shade trees	Fair
ornamental trees and shrubs	Fair
densely planted lines of evergreens along the alley and Third Street	Fair
three historical markers	Good
picnic tables and benches	Fair
informational, directional, regulatory signs	Fair
water pump	Fair
grill	Fair
overhead power lines and poles (along Second Street, pole includes Travelers' Information Radio System transmitter and antenna)	Good
telephone riser	Good
dusk to dawn lights	Good

DISTRICT NO. 1 SCHOOLHOUSE

Feature Name	Condition Rating
District No. 1 Schoolhouse	Fair
wood shed	Fair
two privy ruins	Poor
tall grass field across site	Fair
mown-grass-surfaced vehicle track accessing front of school building	Poor
grass-lined ditches along street frontages	Fair
well with cover	Fair
playground equipment, metal jungle gym	Poor
playground equipment, wood timber play structure	Poor
playground equipment, metal combination swing set/slide	Poor
street signs along Fourth Street	Good
historical marker/sign	Fair
culverts	Good
propane tank	Good
overhead power line and pole with light	Fair

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Feature Name	Condition Rating
First Baptist Church	Fair
concrete sidewalk and ramp fronting Fourth Street	Good
concrete stoop at building entrance	Fair
grassy lawn, closely mown	Fair
rose shrub along front building foundation	Fair
hackberry tree at rear of building	Fair
historical marker/sign at front of building	Good
metal well or cistern cover	Fair
butane/propane tank	Fair
overhead power lines and poles	Fair

FLETCHER-SWITZER RESIDENCE/ ST. FRANCIS HOTEL

Feature Name	Condition Rating
Fletcher-Switzer residence	Poor
mobile home	Good
two small outbuildings	Fair
concrete walk and set of steps	Fair
hard-packed earth access drive	Poor
informal area for parking behind residence	Poor
grassy lawn, closely mown	Poor
hedgerow of trees and shrubs	Fair
shade trees	Poor
shrub hedge	Fair
weedy growth around foundation of residence	Poor
well or cistern	Fair
butane/propane tanks	Fair
fire hydrant	Good
overhead power lines and poles, power line pole with street light	Good
historical marker at front of building	Good
stop sign at corner of Third Street and Washington Avenue	Good

Chapter 4



ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

Since its settlement in 1877, Nicodemus, Kansas, has been a significant place for African Americans, not only as a vibrant, living community that has weathered economic and environmental hardships, but also for the prominent symbolic role it has played in the settlement of the Black West, and as a historic example of self-determination and of socio-economic success.

Since the 1970s, Nicodemus has also been recognized by the Federal Government as a nationally significant historic site for its associations with Emancipation, Reconstruction, and Federal land acquisition and disbursement policies in the American West. The process of recognition began in 1973 when the United States Department of the Interior undertook a study of Nicodemus to aid in the determination of its significance. This study led to the listing of the Nicodemus Historic District in 1974 on the National Register of Historic Places, and National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation in 1976. The NHL program, which recognizes historic properties possessing exceptional national significance and integrity, is administered by the National Park Service (NPS). The Nicodemus NHL Historic District depicts six significant historic themes, which are represented variously within the sites administered by the NPS through the National Park and NHL Systems. Within the original nomination, Nicodemus was found to represent the following three themes: Ethnic Communities, Poverty Relief and Urban Reform, and Civil Rights. Three additional themes have since been identified: The Reconstruction Era, The Farmer's Frontier, and Farming Communities.

The Nicodemus NHL Historic District encompasses the 161-acre quarter section of the original Nicodemus townsite. At the time of its designation, the district included seven buildings, two sites, and one historical marker that were considered to be contributing resources. Two of the buildings have since been lost to deterioration, and continuing deterioration and the possibility of further loss could diminish integrity and jeopardize the site's status as a NHL.

In 1993, the NPS conducted a Special Resource Study to determine "whether Nicodemus would be a suitable and feasible addition to the National Park System."[1] The study indicated that

> Nicodemus represents the African-American experience and contribution to western settlement and expansion; it illustrates the important role of community in the social reform movement of southern black Americans; and it interprets the lives of black Americans during Reconstruction. Though the NPS administers four areas pertaining to the Civil Rights theme, Nicodemus could be the only site depicting the establishment of self-governing communities as a route toward acquiring civil rights. In support of these findings, Nicodemus is found to be suitable for inclusion to the National Park System.[2]

Three years later, in November 1996, Congress passed Bill H.R. 4236 establishing Nicodemus National Historic Site (NHS). The purpose of the establishment of the Nicodemus NHS was "1) 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 2) 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."

The Nicodemus NHS is comprised of five properties—the First Baptist Church, Fletcher-Switzer residence, District No. 1 Schoolhouse, African Methodist Episcopal

[1] National Park Service, *Nicodemus, Kansas, Special Resource Study* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, May 1993), i.

[2] *Ibid.*

(A.M.E.) Church, and Township Hall. All of these, with the exception of the District No. 1 Schoolhouse, were listed in the NHL designation as contributing to the Nicodemus Historic District.

While the evaluation included herein confirms and is consistent with the findings of the original NHL nomination, the one aspect of the nomination that has been problematic for development of the CLR is its lack of a clearly stated period of significance for the site. In order to properly develop a comparative analysis of historic and existing conditions, and an integrity assessment as required in this CLR's scope of work, it is important that all aspects of the site's potential significance be considered and that an appropriate period of significance be determined or at least assumed based on careful study of the issues.

In order to proceed with the comparative analysis that forms the basis for treatment recommended in this CLR, OCULUS has prepared an overview of all available information pertaining to the National Register-level significance of Nicodemus, and additional considerations that have been developed as part of this study based upon the project team's research, analysis, and assessment of the site and its physical and social history. The pages that follow identify the full range of significance issues currently under consideration by the CLR and Historic Structures Report (HSR) teams. This analysis does not change the NHL assessment of significance, but in many cases enhances the justification for currently designated areas of significance. In others, the CLR suggests additional aspects of site significance that were not previously considered. For some of these, the CLR suggests further avenues of investigation where conclusions could not be determined within the scope of this project. Future investigations that would likely support determinations not possible as part of this CLR include an Ethnographic Study that would consider the connections between the community and the place, and a Historic Resource Study that would further develop the historic contexts that pertain to Nicodemus and provide sufficient basis for evaluation of National Register and NHL-level significance.

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE SIGNIFICANCE INFORMATION

As indicated above, the 161-acre townsite of Nicodemus has already been designated a NHL. Receipt of this designation requires that a site first be determined nationally significant in accordance with at least one of six criteria. The 1974 National Register nomination provided the basis for the designation of the NHL. The nomination states that Nicodemus is significant because "it is the only remaining town established by blacks of the 'Exoduster' movement which was organized mainly through the efforts of Benjamin 'Pap' Singleton;" that it was "the oldest reported U. S. Post Office supervised by blacks" [since determined to be *one* of the early Post Offices supervised by blacks, not *the* earliest]; and that it is "symbolic of the pioneer spirit of blacks who dared to leave the only region they had been familiar with, in a search for personal freedom and the opportunity to develop their talents and opportunities."[3] Today it is not believed that Benjamin 'Pap' Singleton had any role in the establishment of Nicodemus, and it is also known that the founding of Nicodemus actually preceded the mass immigration of blacks, known as the Exoduster movement, out of the South after the end of Reconstruction. These revisions to the original statement do not in any way diminish the significance of the site.

In the 1996 enabling legislation establishing the Nicodemus NHS, Congress echoed the findings of the 1974 National Register nomination by restating that:

- 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; and

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

The legislation, however, went further in noting that Nicodemus is significant because it "continues to be a valuable African-American community."

[3] Greenlee, Marcia M, "Nicodemus Historic District and Dugout House, National Register Nomination Form" (Washington, DC: Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation, December 1974).

The DRAFT General Management Plan (GMP) currently being prepared by the NPS also elaborates on the significance of the site:

> Nicodemus National Historic Site is significant because Nicodemus, Kansas, is the oldest continuously occupied black town in the West. Nicodemus also derives significance from its establishment as a planned black community at the end of Reconstruction in response to extreme, racially motivated social and economic injustices of the South, and in order to seek the personal freedom commonly experienced by others during westward expansion.
>
> Nicodemus represents the five pillars of many African-American communities, both during the 19th Century and during the 20th Century. These include: home, church, school, business, and traditions of mutual assistance and local government.
>
> The re-establishment of home and family life was critical to millions of former slaves. Many newly freed African-Americans criss-crossed the Atlantic States trying to locate loved ones separated by sale, slavery or war. Tied to the importance of the home is the actual building of the home and related structures. This symbolized not only the ability and the willingness to work, but also permanence and an attachment to family as well as place.
>
> After re-establishing the family, the next priority for most 19th Century African-Americans was participation in organized religious activities. One of the distinctive elements of African-American culture in the postwar 19th Century was the desire to create and maintain churches that provided some semblance of comfort and mutual assistance in ways that participation in white churches had not. Prior to emancipation, slaves were encouraged to participate in religious services, either in the rear of white churches or in separate services held in the slave quarters. These services were supposed to teach the slave that slavery was a proper and natural institution and that he or she was to accept slavery and the dictums of the master. Finding this an unacceptable pattern of beliefs, black ministers began to form congregations both before and after emancipation.

Churches became one of the centers of black social life, fulfilling many different roles. Nicodemus was no different with the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church organized in 1879. The First Baptist Church was organized in 1880.

After religion, education was the next priority for most African-Americans. Town co-founder and former slave S.P. Roundtree "wore a brand on one cheek as punishment for having received educational instruction from his master's son." Some wished to have a better life for themselves and their children through education. Others simply wanted to be able to read the Bible before they died.

Still others saw it as a way to achieve the equality that seemed to be at arms' length based on temporary civil rights laws signed in the decade after the end of the Civil War.

Mr. and Mrs. Z.T. Fletcher first provided schooling at Nicodemus as early as 1879 at their sod hotel. A school was later erected in 1887 on Fourth Street. When that school burned, another—the existing District No. 1 schoolhouse—was built in its place in 1918.

The need to make a living and be as self sufficient as possible was also important to African-Americans after the Civil War. Thrilled by their ability to finally earn and save money, they were also beset in the South with problems caused by feelings of resentfulness and competition by neighboring whites.

There were many proponents of African-Americans going into business and the residents of Nicodemus heard the call. Reverend John Samuels made and repaired shoes for the residents of Nicodemus. Z.T. Fletcher opened a grocery store in the fall of 1877. By 1879, the town boasted a general store, two livery stables, a real estate office, a drug store, and a hotel.

An undeniable attraction of a town such as Nicodemus for black ex-Southerners was the opportunity to participate in local government and get out from under the often brutal and capricious domain of white police officers and court officials. In fact, the founding of

Nicodemus took place three years before the official establishment of Graham County.

In Nicodemus, residents became heavily involved in politics and were elected to offices in the township as well as being an important power in county politics. In 1879, a township election resulted in three African-Americans being elected to hold the offices of Justice of the Peace, Township Clerk, and Roads Overseer. County elections in 1880 resulted in black men being elected as Court Clerk, County Attorney and two of the County Commissioners.

As one of the only remaining western towns established by black Americans at the end of Reconstruction, Nicodemus represents a largely untold version of the story of western expansion and the settlement of the Great Plains.

As a symbol of black pioneer spirit, Nicodemus represents a rejection of rampant racism and the overcoming of social, economic and natural obstacles. Nicodemus remains a lasting legacy that can be seen in the buildings that survive, that can be felt in the determination to succeed in business and agriculture, and in the proud memories that live in the hearts of residents and descendants.[4]

IDENTIFICATION OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS ASSOCIATED WITH NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The significance of Nicodemus NHS cannot be determined without a particular understanding of important local, state and national contexts. Development of relevant contexts for evaluation of a historic site is usually the purview of a Historic Resource Study. In the absence of such a study for Nicodemus, the CLR team, through review of the available National Register and NHL designation information, Special Resource Study, Draft GMP, the benefit of additional directed research, and the support provided by document reviewers and the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office, has identified a list of historic contexts and themes associated with Nicodemus NHS that must be considered in formulating a thorough significance evaluation for the site. This list may need to be revised and augmented as further research is conducted on behalf of the site. The contexts listed below have been given special consideration in the discussion of National Register significance conveyed over the pages that follow.

National Contexts

- Post-Emancipation migration by African Americans out of the South and Upland South into the Midwest and West, ca. 1877–1900; [*Nicodemus community establishment and development*] and
- The commemoration of ethnic heritage events by post-Emancipation African Americans, ca. 1877–2000. [*Emancipation Celebration/Homecoming*].

State and Local Contexts

- Peopling places—the post-Reconstruction African-American settlements of Kansas, ca. 1875–1880; [*Fletcher-Switzer residence*]
- Speculative development within the Midwest and West during the second half of the nineteenth century, ca. 1850–1900;
- Historical archeological resources spanning the period 1877–1930;
- Postbellum railroad development and the commercial expansion and bust of small Midwestern towns, 1865–1900; [*Nicodemus as a rare example of a community surviving being bypassed by the railroad, but typical of regional boom and bust cycles*]
- The establishment of post-emancipation African-American education in rural Kansas, ca. 1877–1900; [*1918 District No. 1 Schoolhouse as perpetuation of educational opportunities first afforded in 1879 sod school, 1887 school erected on Fourth Street*]
- The establishment of post-Emancipation African-American religious institutions in rural Kansas, ca. 1877–1900; [*A.M.E. Church; 1906 First Baptist Church as perpetuation of congregation established 1880*]
- Subsistence and agricultural history during the early settlement of the Great Plains, ca. 1877–1890;
- The WPA period and municipal construction projects; [*Township Hall, 1939, provides site suitable for perpetuation of community participation in local government*]
- Subsistence and agricultural history in the dustbowl Great Plains during the Great Depression, ca. 1930–1945.

[4] These statements may evolve as the Draft GMP undergoes internal and public review.

CLR AND HSR STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction

The pages that follow draw together all of the currently available significance information, augmenting it with the additional research, evaluation, and consideration that has been undertaken by the CLR team. The significance statement that follows also incorporates the findings of the HSR team that has concurrently studied the five buildings comprising the Nicodemus NHS in more detail. The significance statement is organized into a summary section followed by a more detailed evaluation of significance in accordance with the four National Register Criteria. The CLR also discusses the significance of Nicodemus as a Traditional Cultural Property, the considerations involved in establishing the property's boundary, and other potentially significant aspects of the site that are not within the purview of the CLR to determine at this time.

Summary Statement of Significance

The cultural landscape of Nicodemus is nationally significant as a rare example of a predominantly black community surviving from a late nineteenth century movement to relocate freed slaves from the injustices and difficulties encountered by remaining in the South after Reconstruction. This living community is representative of a traditional cultural property—a rural community of predominantly African-American friends, neighbors, and relatives, many of whom are descended from the founders of the townsite, or other early residents. This community continues to reflect beliefs and practices that have evolved with the community since its inception. Nicodemus possesses state or local significance for its association with prominent individuals, and with historic contexts relating to agriculture, early settlement, Kansas town development, ethnic communities, and farming communities. It is likely also significant for various individual buildings representative of vernacular styles, as influenced by local traditions, African-American traditions, and influences of Southern origin.[5]

Nicodemus is significant within the areas of agriculture, architecture, archeology, community planning and development, ethnic heritage (black), exploration/settlement, and social history. Although insufficient investigation has been conducted to date to determine the eligibility of the site's archeological resources under Criterion D, substantial oral and documentary sources exist that provide evidence of where former structures once stood, and their particular functions. This, coupled with various oral history projects that have already been conducted and the relatively undeveloped state of the townsite, suggests that the potential is high for archeological investigations to contribute a substantial amount of new information to our understanding of the settlement and early history of Nicodemus. Thus, Nicodemus appears to possess significance at least at a state level, and possibly at a national level, for the potential of its archeological resources to yield important information regarding the early African-American settlement of the site.

The period of significance relating to these aspects of significance likely spans 1877 to the present, with sub-periods associated with different criteria and areas. The period establishing the site's NHL level significance is 1877–1888. As a "traditional cultural property" that has maintained a cohesive community within the site ever since, Nicodemus suggests a period of significance that extends thereafter to the present.

[5] For specific information relating to the Criterion C architectural significance of the site and its buildings, please refer to the 2003 Nicodemus NHS Historic Structures Report.

Significance Evaluation by National Register Criterion

The National Register of Historic Places stipulates that in order to be eligible for the National Register, a historic landscape must "possess the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology...engineering and culture and integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and

> A. be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of our history; or
>
> B. be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
>
> C. embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
>
> D. have yielded or be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history."

Nicodemus meets all of the above criteria for many of the identified themes and areas of significance, and retains sufficient integrity to be eligible for the National Register. A discussion of the significance of the site within each of the four Criteria follows.

CRITERION A[6]

The settlers who came to Nicodemus were part of a larger trend that was defined by the flight of large groups of African Americans from the Southern states to Kansas. These African Americans chose to escape the social and economic injustices that characterized the post-Emancipation South. They were lured to Kansas and the American Midwest by the promise of cheap land and a search for freedom characterized by socio-economic opportunity and a new beginning. Kansas became prominent in the minds of African Americans by 1869 due to its antebellum history involving an intense struggle to remain a free state and its association with John Brown and other radical abolitionists, and because of larger forces such as railroads and land promoters who boosted the promise and settlement of the area. As a result, African Americans began to perceive Kansas as a refuge from persecution and oppression.

Actual settlement of Kansas did not begin until Benjamin 'Pap' Singleton established the Baxter Springs colony in Cherokee County, Kansas, ca. 1875–1876. The community of Nicodemus, including the Nicodemus NHS, is representative of the earliest African-American settlements of Kansas and the larger Midwest. Established in 1877, Nicodemus is unique in pre-dating the 'Exodust,' a mass wave of emigration out of the Upland and Deep South into Kansas and the Midwest. Throughout the early 1870s, several black organizations in Southern states formed migration societies that promoted the more concentrated effort to develop African-American settlement of Kansas, Nebraska, and Indian Territory. The Nicodemus community is also significant because it is today a rare example of a surviving African-American settlement from this period. It appears unique in retaining the community institutions of church and governance, such as the First Baptist Church and the Township Board. Under Criterion A, Nicodemus appears to possess national and state significance for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Nicodemus residents and descendants have celebrated the Emancipation Celebration, or Homecoming, every year save one, since its founding in 1878. This annual summer celebration first commemorated the emancipation of slaves in the West Indies on August 1, 1834, and its history may be traced to antebellum religious revivals and camp meetings or a traditional 'Colored People's Fair.'[7] The Celebration was sponsored by the Grand Benevolent Society and was first held in the Welton/Scruggs's Grove, a small stand of trees southwest of town on the South Fork Solomon River. Today, the Homecoming celebration brings back Nicodemus's descendants, friends and families from around the country, and serves to celebrate their unique history and identity, and unite the now widespread community. As a traditional cultural property, under Criterion A, the Nicodemus NHS appears to possess national, state and local significance because of its association with cultural

[6] As noted in National Register Bulletin 15, the historic landscape must possess the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology..., engineering and culture and integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of our history.

[7] Angela Bates-Tompkins, Nov. 14, 2000, personal communication.

practices or beliefs of a living community that are rooted in that community's history, and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity and cohesiveness of the community.

Nicodemus NHS also appears to possess local and state significance for its association with several practices consistent with the settlement and early history of the Great Plains and the western Kansas prairie. Under Criterion A, the property likely possesses local and state significance for its association with late nineteenth century rural subsistence and agricultural practices, for its association with the establishment of early African-American educational institutions in Kansas, for its association with the establishment of early African-American religious institutions in Kansas, and for its association with the cyclical boom and bust patterns typical of small Midwestern towns tied to the promotion of the railroad.

The re-establishment of home, a strong social network, and a means of livelihood were essential for all recently emancipated slaves. The establishment and expansion of African-American religious institutions is a hallmark of post-Emancipation African-American culture, particularly in areas that were sparsely settled like the American Midwest. Churches provided religious, social, and moral support for communities of disenfranchised African Americans, and were the center of social life. Education was widely recognized by post-Emancipation African Americans as a way to political and socio-economic freedom. Along with churches, schools were among the first public institutions to be initiated in Nicodemus, Kansas. The tight social bonds that religious, educational, and other organizations provided aided the development of a communal livelihood based in agriculture and business. Because the Nicodemus community was able to pull together and assist one another in times of need, particularly in the early years of settlement, their goal of self-sufficiency, freedom and independence was realized.[8]

Finally, also under Criterion A, the property likely possesses state and local significance for its association with subsistence and agricultural practices during the Great Depression in Dust Bowl prairie Kansas, ca. 1930–1945.

Establishment and Boom Years of the Community of Nicodemus, 1877–1888

The significance statements included in the NHL designation as well as the DRAFT GMP indicate that Nicodemus is nationally significant under Criterion A for its association with the founding of a planned African-American frontier town at the end of post-Civil War Reconstruction, which provided a new beginning for those affected by extreme, racially-motivated social and economic injustices of the South, and allowed the residents to seek the personal freedom commonly experienced by others during westward expansion. The significance of the community is also derived in part from Nicodemus's status as a rare surviving example of a general movement to establish African-American towns in the Midwest during the same period. This period of significance is heavily dependent upon archeological resources and the environmental setting of the townsite and Township.

Early settlers to Kansas chose sites near the Missouri-Kansas border, along the Kansas (Kaw) River and its associated tributaries, and along the Santa Fe Trail southwest to Council Grove or Emporia. Many of these settlements were a result of land transactions between American Indians and European Americans. Before 1854 when the land opened for settlement, Kansas had been occupied by American Indians (both emigrant and native populations), missionaries, itinerant trappers and traders, and military personnel associated with the numerous fortifications.

Despite the economic opportunities for settlers within this territory, population density remained low. By 1860, only twelve Kansas counties had more than five individuals per square mile and 9.4 percent of these settlers lived in incorporated towns. Many of these people were of western European background.

Within this matrix, pro-slavery and anti-slavery settlers drew their boundaries. Supporters of slavery organized the towns of Atchison and Leavenworth, and "the small villages of Franklin, Tecumseh, and Lecompton were founded to support slavery near the free state strongholds of Topeka and Lawrence."[9] Other towns were "founded

[8] One descendant notes that "embracing the statement 'The re-establishment of home, a strong social network, and a means for livelihood was essential...' is part of the reason why the Nicodemus Flour Co-op contributed all of its proceeds from Homecoming to the renovation of the First Baptist Church of Nicodemus. The sense of community, crop diversity, and self-sufficiency is what we want to relive." The Nicodemus Flour Co-op is comprised of local farmers who are attempting to establish a mill within the community and to market a flour product that is tied to Nicodemus's heritage.

by opponents of slavery. Lawrence, Topeka, Manhattan, Wabaunsee, Emporia, and Burlington (Hampton) depended on support from the anti-slavery New England Emigrant Company."[10] But free and enslaved African Americans also lived in pre-territorial, territorial, and Civil War Kansas. The 1860 census recorded 625 free people of color and two enslaved people. Free people settled in and near river towns. Military leaders welcomed these people as soldiers, yet few Kansans considered them politically equal.

After the close of the American Civil War, many immigrants from Europe and from other parts of the United States traveled to the Midwest. In Kansas, they encountered a landscape organized along township/range/section survey lines, resulting from the General Land Office (GLO) survey system, which started in this part of Kansas as early as 1869. This system required land to be divided into townships six miles square which were then subdivided into sections one-mile square. Stakes and stones were set at each township corner, section corner, halfway between section markers, and on section lines. Surveying along this system continued in Kansas until 1876.

Private title to these newly surveyed public lands was obtained in one of three ways: direct purchase, military warrant, and preemption. Land grants provided for common schools and two sections of every congressional township provided support for schools, often through the sale of the land in the sections. Combined with the Morrill Act of 1862, these grants funded commons schools and institutions of higher learning. Almost one-sixth of the state was granted to railroad companies.

Within this search for land, town company speculation was a big business. An organization of investors—a town company—obtained its charter from the legislature to plat a town. The Federal Townsite Preemption Act permitted a town company to purchase up to 320 acres. The Nicodemus Town Company registered Nicodemus in 1877,[11] and Nicodemus was thus typical of the practice of using an organized company to obtain a town charter.

Unique to Nicodemus, however, was its focus in providing a town for former slaves. Its physical layout or platting, however, is typical of nineteenth century town plats used during the period. An almost identical town plat was used to establish Langston, Oklahoma, and a similar plat was used at Dunlap, Kansas.[12]

The boom and bust periods experienced in Nicodemus during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be attributed in part to the town's being bypassed by the railroad, the Great Depression, and natural occurrences affecting agricultural practice. Out-migration clearly accelerated during the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl due to economic hardships and racially motivated denials by banks to refinance loans on the property of African Americans in the rural community. Today, out-migration to urban centers and other parts of the country has greatly affected towns such as Nicodemus across the Midwest and Great Plains. The Associated Press reported a 17 percent decrease in population for Graham County between 1990 and 2000. The ongoing survival of Nicodemus in the face of regional out-migration pressure enhances its significance as a traditional cultural property.

The areas of significance for the property under this association are likely Community Planning and Development, Black Ethnic Heritage, and Social History. The period of significance most likely associated with this area and aspect of the community's history is 1877 to 1888. These dates encompass the origin of the community through its boom years, cut short by rail line route selection that bypassed Nicodemus, limiting the area's commercial viability. The period's end date coincides with the establishment of the town of Bogue, Kansas.

[9] Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, "Study Unit on the Period of Exploration and Settlement, 1820s–1880s" (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1987), 52.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*, 46.

[12] While beyond the scope of this project, further investigation into the origins of nineteenth century regional speculative town plats would provide an interesting perspective on this issue. The town plats for Nicodemus, Langston, and Dunlap appear to have been adopted for these communities from an existing plat, not necessarily developed specifically for these communities. Interesting questions arise, such as, What was the origin of these plats? How were lot sizes determined? etc.

Emancipation Celebration, 1878 to Present

Under Criterion A, the community of Nicodemus is likely significant for the Emancipation Celebration events, held almost annually since 1878, to mark the freeing of West Indies slaves by the British on August 1, 1834. Nicodemus is one of many communities nationwide to have marked this first emancipation act, and is therefore representative of a national context for such celebrations. In Nicodemus, the event celebrated more than emancipation. The celebration was traditionally a three-day event that would begin on August 1st. It quickly attracted residents of the Township and visitors from all over the region. Later, former residents and descendants of current and former residents began to return to Nicodemus to participate in the celebration. The event appears to have had a profound influence on the longevity of the community, contributing to its ability to celebrate its existence in the face of difficult economic conditions, and to maintain a sense of cohesion, purpose, and identity while similar communities were not able to survive.

The significance of the Emancipation Celebration, later known as Homecoming, involves its strong link with the community of Nicodemus. This idea is made clear when viewed within the framework of National Register Bulletin 38: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, which indicates that

> Traditional cultural significance is derived from the role a property plays in a community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices. Properties may have significance under Criterion A if they are associated with events, or series of events, significant to the cultural traditions of a community.[13]

Homecoming, as it is called today, is primarily celebrated within the townsite. During this annual event which is planned each year by a committee of volunteers, celebrants typically join along Washington Avenue to watch and participate in a parade. They also attend a benediction, fashion show, and other events within the Township Hall. Local residents and visiting descendants, friends, and other family visit exhibits, vendors, and other booths set up within the Roadside Park, picnic in and around the Priscilla Art Club, meet and play within the Township Park, attend church services and gospel performances within the First Baptist Church, and visit with townsite and Township residents. Much of the townsite, therefore, plays an important role in the activities and setting for the event each year. Homecoming remains a highly important event to life of the Nicodemus community, reaffirming familial bonds and providing an opportunity to recall and celebrate its history. Each year descendants, family, and friends are drawn back to Nicodemus for the Homecoming celebration, to reconnect with family members and other descendants, reminisce, and most importantly to return 'home.' This long-standing cultural practice serves to celebrate and reinforce who Nicodemus's African-American families are and where they came from. By re-establishing kin and social networks, and recalling the colony's history, Nicodemus's African Americans continue to practice a nearly 125 year old tradition of cultural renewal and reaffirmation. Homecoming is one of the most visible and direct links between the past and the present and affords the best opportunity for illustrating to the public this area of significance. Homecoming plays a crucial role in solidifying and renewing the sense of community in Nicodemus.

Prior to 1952, one of the most important resources associated with the Emancipation Celebration was a grove of cottonwood, and possibly walnut, trees known as Welton's or Scruggs's Grove, located along a public highway on private property near the river southwest of the townsite. No longer extant, the grove served as the site for the majority of the celebration's events between ca. 1878 and 1952. The grove likely offered shade, a sense of space, and possibly even the intangible sense of a sacred or meaningful place, to the annual celebration. Trees, which are scarce in the region due to lack of rainfall and the desiccating effect of constant winds, are locally associated with river corridors because of the protective nature of the low-lying topography and increased availability of groundwater. Many historians have documented the popularity of groves as sites to hold special events in the Midwest. J.B. Jackson discusses the importance of groves in his book *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics*:

> The grove was usually the site of a revival or a camp meeting, and possibly of a church as well. Revivals and camp meetings were, and still are, important events in much of rural America, attracting hundreds, even thousands of people,

[13] Patricia L. Parker and Thomas F. King, National Register Bulletin 38: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, 1990, rev. 1992; 1998), 13.

and often lasting several days. We associate such meetings with the first decades of the 19th Century when they proliferated all over frontier America, but they are a common occurrence even now. The deserted clearings in the woods often come to life in the fall of the year. So the place name is actually much more than a mere place name. It indicates a particular *kind* of place, and to many people it serves as a reminder of an important event in their lives: a profound and often decisive religious experience....In 1834 a church paper proposed guidelines for the efficient organization of a camp meeting. Meetings were to be held between the end of July and the end of September, presumably so as not to interfere with the work of planting and harvesting, and the site was to be one with "good water, dry ground, pleasant shade, agreeable woods for walking and recreation, timber for tentpoles and firewood, and pasturage for horses."...The grove [became] a kind of non-environment, a space free of social or behavioral controls.[14]

The proximity to the South Fork Solomon River was likely another important factor in selection of the site for the celebration. In addition to the physical benefits that the river afforded, it may have also played a symbolic role as a source of life and renewal for the community.

The Nicodemus Community, 1877 to Present

National Register Bulletin 38: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties* defines traditional cultural properties as sites that are eligible for inclusion in the National Register because of their association with the cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that a) are rooted in that community's history; and b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community. Properties that possess traditional cultural significance include a "location where a community has traditionally carried out economic, artistic, or other cultural practices important in maintaining its historical identity." While determination of the eligibility of Nicodemus as a traditional cultural property is beyond the scope of this CLR, Nicodemus appears eligible as such under Criterion A. It relevant historic associations include black town settlement in the Midwest after Reconstruction, and the maintenance of the cohesive community since 1877 that has a strong sense of its own rich heritage and unique identity despite the great economic and natural hardships that have been wrought on the area since its inception. It is recommended that the NPS conduct an ethnographic study and a Historic Resource Study which would provide sufficient information to support the evaluation of the community as a traditional cultural property. The paragraphs that follow are intended to suggest how the tangible resources that make up the community's historic setting relate to traditional activities and contribute to the community's identity as a traditional cultural property.

Interviews conducted with former and current Nicodemus residents have consistently identified buildings, structures, and other regional cultural and natural features that are significant to the community in different ways. These cultural and natural features in Nicodemus and its immediate vicinity are intimately associated with the history and context of the settlement of Nicodemus, and therefore with the cultural identity of its residents and their descendants. Places such as the original townsite, Spring Creek and the South Fork Solomon River, Welton/Scruggs's Grove and baseball diamond, the Nicodemus and Mount Olive cemeteries, Township Hall, and the locations of former dugouts and sod dwellings are historically significant and in most cases continue to be important symbols and landmarks in the eyes of Nicodemus's African-American community. As a traditional cultural property, the period of significance for the townsite as a living community would extend to the present day and accommodate as significant the ongoing evolution of the townsite as it continues to incorporate traditional practices into contemporary situations.

From its initial settlement, the Nicodemus townsite has been a center of social, religious, educational and commercial activities for a community of early settlers and their descendants scattered throughout the surrounding region. In a pattern familiar to the American Midwest, early settlers resided both in town and within surrounding rural areas. While a predominant number settled within Nicodemus Township, others established homes in Bogue, Damar, and other nearby towns. Today, kinship ties extend beyond northwestern Kansas to most areas of the United States, and the community of Nicodemus remains the "home place" for many who

[14] J.B. Jackson, "The Sacred Grove in America," in *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics*. (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 77-87.

have lived there, or whose ancestors once resided there. Features, land uses, beliefs, and cultural practices that characterized the community during the nineteenth century survive to this day, and continue to define Nicodemus for those who consider it a home place.

Traditions of independence, self-reliance, and farming that result in and from a strong connection to the land are highly characteristic of Nicodemus. Representations of these traditions include the numerous family farms that occupy the Township as well as the townsite. Descendants retain a strong personal affiliation with land that is or was owned by or associated with family members regardless of where they currently reside. The Township's grid of graded earthen country roads and farm fields conforming to the alignment of section lines continue to reflect late nineteenth century settlement patterns and practices, as do the farmstead clusters, fences, dry-land farming practices, growing of wheat and corn crops, and raising of beef cattle. Local residents also continue to collect plants, fruit, and berries from known locales in the wild, and to maintain vegetable gardens in support of self-reliance and independence.

In addition, family, spirituality, and community and political involvement, have traditionally been of high importance to the community. The townsite, with its gridded streets and dense cluster of residences and institutions, has since the beginning served as the physical and symbolic center of the community. Community institutions, critical to its spiritual, social, and political traditions, have for the most part been centered within the townsite. The concentration of important institutions, public activities and uses along Washington Avenue, and its evolution into a main street during the late nineteenth century also remains evident today. The Township Hall, one of the most prominent features of the main street and a central focus of the community, recalls the tradition of independence and participation in local government that have played an integral role in the community since its inception. The townsite also remains the focus for the community's other surviving institutional buildings—the A.M.E. Church, First Baptist Church, and District No. 1 Schoolhouse. Since establishment of the townsite, organized religion has been a primary focus for spiritual and social life in the community. The A.M.E. and First Baptist Church buildings are highly important features within the community, despite their disuse for religious services. Education has also traditionally been highly valued by the Nicodemus community. A school was established within the townsite as early as 1879. The surviving 1918 schoolhouse building retains a high symbolic value within the townsite despite the loss of its educational use.

AGRICULTURAL REFORM MOVEMENT, 1878–1920

Nicodemus is also potentially significant at the state level for its association with turn-of-the-century agricultural reform movements that had a strong impact on northwestern Kansas. As noted in Chapter Two, the reform movement, initiated by state agricultural agencies, promoted drought-tolerant strains of crop species, soil conservation techniques for plowing, sowing, and harvesting, and alternative irrigation technologies. These practices were slowly adopted by many in the Nicodemus community. In 1910, a farmer's institute sponsored by the Kansas State Agricultural College was held in a church in Nicodemus. More than 150 farmers attended. In 1911, the first of two agricultural schools was created in the Township when W.O. Sturgeon and his wife purchased 160 acres from W.L. Sayers, and subsequently sold the property in trust to the Western Kansas Industrial Training School. In 1915, a farmer's union was organized in Nicodemus Township. The improved farming techniques and choice of crops appeared to make an immediate difference. "After 1916, the people just gradually went to breaking out more ground and they went wheat crazy. In 1916 they had a bumper crop." Promotional publications of the period document that Graham County began to stress the diversification of its agricultural base and also emphasized the importance of egg and butter production and that the "dairy business holds a glowing promise for the future." In addition, alternative irrigation technologies were noted, including the irrigation of vegetable gardens by windmill.[15] It is not yet clear whether these modifications helped the community to weather the Dust Bowl, but further investigations into this aspect of Nicodemus's history is warranted.

15 "The Story of Nicodemus," *Negroes Clippings*, March 1910, Vol. 5-6, 202; Graham County Deed Book 36, Page 26; Robert Hackenberg, "A Negro Settlement in Kansas," January 1, 1918 (Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas), 7; Historical Records Survey, Division of Women's and Professional Projects, WPA, *Inventory of the County Archives of Kansas*, No. 33, Graham County, Hill City, 1938, 9; Fly, "Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas," Interview with Bernice A. Bates 1983, 16; Emmons, ed., *Graham County, Kansas*, np.

TOWNSITE DEVELOPMENT, 1877–1888

Passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 turned Kansas into a battleground between pro- and anti-slavery advocates prior to the beginning of the American Civil War. Seven years later amid rising tensions regarding the institution of slavery, Congress designated Kansas a free state. After the close of the Civil War in 1865, a period of reconstruction, by which the seceded Confederate States were restored to full membership of the Union, began. During Reconstruction, the Federal Government protected the civil rights and voting rights of African Americans in the South. African Americans enjoyed some degree of protection from violence and physical force during the Reconstruction era. The Reconstruction effort was unsuccessful and, by 1877, congressional Republicans agreed to end it. The withdrawal of federal protection from violence at the end of Reconstruction caused many African Americans to flee the South. While many of these people traveled to the North, several thousand moved west.

The establishment and subsequent settlement of Nicodemus by entrepreneurial African Americans and white Kansans immediately followed the end of Reconstruction and preceded the well-known Exoduster Movement (1879–1880) by two years. Towns such as Nicodemus were proclaimed to be oases for those experiencing injustices in former slave states. The Atchison *Weekly Champion* noted in 1881 that "the Nicodemus question is a vital one. If Nicodemus succeeded, it settled the Southern question. If Nicodemus failed, it would darken the whole future of the colored race in this country."[16] One year after the platting of the townsite, Nicodemus was home to more than 200 African-American settlers emigrating primarily from Kentucky and Mississippi.

The railroad system in Kansas began to take shape on paper prior to the beginning of the Civil War. While more than 1,100 lines were chartered in Kansas, only about 200 actually laid track. After the end of the Civil War, the country was no longer split between the North and South; rather, it was fractured between the East and West. At this time, passengers and freight from the East could only travel as far west as the Missouri River.

The building of transcontinental railroad lines was fueled by the development of industries, the need for the efficient transportation of goods from coast to interior to coast, and the belief held by political leaders that transcontinental railroads would be an agent for political unity between the East and the West. In addition, the need to expand railroad lines across the country was touted as an advantage to the military and its numerous installations nationwide.

The proliferation of railroads after the Civil War encouraged town speculation. The presence of the railroad greatly enhanced the financial security and economic well being of the towns adjacent to it. The Kansas Pacific crossed the state in 1870, as did the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe in 1872. Railroad development slowed in the late 1870s because of national financial panic. By 1878, though, nearly 3,000 miles of railroad track etched the state of Kansas.[17]

In Nicodemus, Township voters approved railroad bonds and agreed to sell the railroad the right of way to build. First surveyed by the Missouri Pacific Railroad and later visited by representatives from the Santa Fe Railroad and Union Pacific, the town was nevertheless bypassed. Typically, when railroads bypassed small Midwestern towns during this era, most were abandoned, or disappeared when they were unable to compete economically with towns that attracted a railroad depot. Nicodemus is an unusual survivor of being bypassed by the railroad, but was typical in its desire to influence the railroads to extend their route through the town.

The areas of significance under this association are Community Planning and Development, Black Ethnic Heritage, and Social History. The period most likely associated with this area and aspect of the community's history is 1877 to 1888. These dates encompass the settlement of the town through its boom years, cut short by rail line route selection that bypassed Nicodemus and thus limited the area's commercial viability. The period's end date coincides with the establishment of the town of Bogue, Kansas. At that time, the economic implications of Nicodemus's loss of the rail line became clear, and individuals began relocating their buildings and businesses from Nicodemus to Bogue. Features which survive with associations to this period include natural resources such as Spring Creek and the South Fork Solomon River, and

[16] Atchison *Weekly Champion*, 1881, 20.

[17] Historic Preservation Department, "Study Unit on the Period of Exploration and Settlement, 1820s-1880s," 55, and Deon Wolfenbarger, "National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form," 2000.

landform and topography, agricultural land uses, fields, and pasture, the Nicodemus cemetery, and the townsite street pattern.

CRITERION B[18]

Nicodemus also appears to possess state and local significance for its association with several persons who have historically contributed to the Nicodemus community, the Graham County and State of Kansas governments, and the further development of the western territories. Under Criterion B, the site likely possesses state and local significance for its association with W. R. Hill—the white town promoter and speculator who selected the site for Nicodemus; Edward P. McCabe—a prominent Nicodemus resident who went on to become actively involved in the Kansas State government; and John W. Niles—an active promoter of Nicodemus during its early history, between 1877 and 1888.

Not haphazard, African-American settlements in Kansas were well organized and grew under effective leadership. With Edward McCabe as clerk of Graham County and the establishment of the *Western Cyclone* newspaper, Nicodemus had both.[19] An African-American lawyer, McCabe traveled to Kansas in 1878 seeking independence and advancement. Soon after his arrival and during the early settlement and colonization of Nicodemus, McCabe found success in his election as clerk of Graham County.[20] Closely identified with the Nicodemus colony and the movement for black power in Kansas, McCabe quickly climbed the political ladder. At the age of thirty-three, McCabe was elected the state auditor of Kansas—the first African American to hold such an office outside of the Southern states.[21]

Despite the debilitating blizzard of 1885–1886 and the steady migration of African Americans to other territories, McCabe chose to remain in Kansas. In 1888, he supported the Republican ticket on the state and national levels and, in the process, gained the appreciation of US Senators John Ingalis and Preston Plumb. In return, Ingalis encouraged President-elect Benjamin Harrison to encourage civil rights for African Americans.[22] Less than two years after this encounter, McCabe moved to Oklahoma territory where he is credited with the construction of the town of Langston and the creation of its local newspaper the *Herald*. McCabe must have brought the plat of Nicodemus with him to Langston, or this was a popular pattern for establishing early western towns, for Langston is based upon the same townsite organization as Nicodemus.

On the local level, both W.R. Hill and John W. Niles contributed to the early success of Nicodemus. Hill, the white treasurer of the Nicodemus Town Company, was responsible for the siting of the town in 1877. He later founded Hill City, which became the county seat. John W. Niles, an African American, actively promoted Nicodemus during its early growth period, between 1876–1877 and 1888. Prospering during this time, Niles also constructed the single-story stone "Douglas House Hotel" on the corner of Second Street and Adams Avenue.

In sum, Nicodemus appears to possess state and local significance under Criterion B for its association with several persons who have historically contributed to the Nicodemus community. Under Criterion B, the property likely possesses state and local significance for its association with Edward P. McCabe, W.R. Hill, and John W. Niles. The period associated with this area and aspect of the community's history is 1877–1888. These dates encompass the settlement of the town through its boom years, and through the period during which McCabe actively participated in state government and during which settlement in Nicodemus was promoted by Niles.

CRITERION C[23]

The potential significance of Nicodemus's architecture in accordance with Criterion C of the National Register was evaluated separately in a Historic Structures Report (HSR) prepared concurrently with this CLR. See the HSR for Criterion C evaluation information.

[18] As noted in National Register Bulletin 15, the historic landscape must possess the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology..., engineering and culture and integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[19] *The Western Cyclone* became the *Nicodemus Cyclone* in 1888. Jere W. Robertson, "Edward P. McCabe and the Langston Experiment," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 51 (Fall 1973): 343.

[20] Nicodemus is located within Graham County.

[21] Robertson, "Edward P. McCabe," 344.

[22] *Ibid.*, 345.

CRITERION D[24]

While a number of archeological sites have been identified within Nicodemus Township and Graham County, few have been evaluated for eligibility and only one has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places (14GH308). Of the sites catalogued by the Kansas State Historical Society, one in particular—14GH326, the remains of a stone and sod dugout on Spring Creek—may be directly associated with early Nicodemus settlement, and was evaluated as significant by the Kansas State Historical Society study.[25]

A total of forty-eight archeological sites have been identified in Graham County with potential prehistoric components. Of these, eight sites have generated enough diagnostic materials to suggest a general date of occupation. Many of these are Keith Focus/Early Archaic (14GH301, 14GH333) and/or middle to late ceramic occupation (14GH303, 14GH410, 14GH501, 14GH502, 14GH504). This body of data suggests that a comprehensive archeological survey of Nicodemus Township may reveal significant information about the prehistoric occupation of the South Fork Solomon River, its tributaries, the project area, and northwestern Kansas.

Under Criterion D, the Nicodemus community appears to possess local, state, and national significance for the potential of its archeological resources to yield important information regarding early African-American settlement and the history of the townsite. Although there have been no archeological investigations or assessments of Nicodemus NHS to date, particular areas of the townsite and Township appear to hold considerable archeological potential. There is likely a substantial amount of significant features and material culture that could be recovered to yield new information about the late nineteenth and twentieth century cultural settlement and use of the landscape.

Substantial oral and documentary resources provide evidence of the locations and functions of numerous historic structures and residences within the Nicodemus townsite and Township. In addition, oral histories conducted during the 1980s and 1990s have identified current and former residents who were able to locate the sites of these former buildings, structures and other features, including 'dugouts' and sod dwellings within the Nicodemus townsite and Township dating to the earliest history of occupation, ca. 1877–1886. This type of evidence, along with the relatively undeveloped character of the townsite and Township, suggest that the potential for archeological investigations to contribute a substantial amount of new information in relation to the settlement and early history of Nicodemus is 'high.' While no prehistoric resources are known to exist within the townsite and Nicodemus NHS, the location of Nicodemus on a bluff overlooking the South Fork Solomon River makes it an ideal site for potential prehistoric resources.

One of the questions that could be addressed through archeological investigation of early townsite and Township residences is how Nicodemus differed, if at all, when compared to other African-American and white rural Midwest settlements of the same period. An important shift in access to and consumption of consumer goods occurred in the nation after the arrival of the railroad in the second half of the nineteenth century. There is a growing body of knowledge about how the arrival of the railroad in Midwestern and Western rural communities changed patterns of material culture consumption. A comparison of material culture recovered from Nicodemus and vicinity could be made with other communities to determine differences and similarities. For example, could a quantitative and qualitative difference in the presence of ceramics, glassware, nails, or other domestic and architectural hardware be linked with the arrival of the railroad at Stockton, and later at Bogue? If a difference is not noted between pre-railroad and post-railroad dates, could the lack of difference be explained culturally? Along the same lines, Nicodemus dugout and sod dwelling sites might also be investigated to understand vernacular architecture and construction methods and farm site and town lot layout practices of Nicodemus residents. If these patterns

[23] As noted in National Register Bulletin 15, the historic landscape must possess the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology..., engineering and culture and integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

[24] As noted in National Register Bulletin 15, the historic landscape must possess the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology..., engineering and culture and integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and have yielded or be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

[25] Barry Williams, "Archeological Survey of a CFBA for 24-33 K-4490-01 in *Graham County, Kansas*," (Topeka: Archeology Department, Kansas State Historical Society, 1992).

are compared with similar structures and landscape features associated with other pioneer communities, the uniqueness of the Nicodemus community can be considered.

Other Significance Considerations—Historic Property Boundaries

POTENTIAL COMMUNITY OF NICODEMUS RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

One of the most complex aspects of evaluating the significance of Nicodemus is determining its boundary. Because the cultural landscape has been, and continues to be, a living community comprised of many types of cultural bonds and connections, defining a land area that encompasses Nicodemus is difficult at best. The scope of work recommends that the CLR focus on the townsite and the Township as definable entities. However, discussions with local residents suggest that the community likely extends beyond these political boundaries to encompass outlying farmsteads and other types of landscape features that have important connections to the community and its sense of place. In accordance with National Register evaluation criteria, the community of Nicodemus is most likely defined as a district that extends outward from the townsite in all directions. A graphic representation of the community as perceived by its residents is illustrated in *figure 113*, located in Chapter III of the CLR.

According to the National Register Bulletin 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, a historic district must possess a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A historic district can comprise features that lack individual distinction and may even be considered eligible if all the components lack individual distinction, provided that the grouping achieves significance as a whole within its historic context. However, a majority of the components must possess integrity, as must the district as a whole.

Oral histories, documentary evidence, and contemporary residents' accounts suggest that Nicodemus is much more than just a few historic buildings or a distinct townsite. Significant cultural and natural features relevant to the history and context of the Nicodemus community are spread out over a fairly large area that includes the Nicodemus townsite, Nicodemus Township, and Graham and neighboring counties. This extensive geographic network of historic resources can be dated to the early settlement period of significance and may be considered typical of late-nineteenth-century rural settlement on the Great Plains.

Based upon the analysis conducted in support of this report, the significant resources of the Nicodemus landscape appear to form a rural historic district of discontiguous sites, which might otherwise be characterized as a Multiple Property district. At a minimum, the district should include the Nicodemus townsite, Nicodemus Township and the Mount Olive area, a segment of the South Fork Solomon River corridor, and portions of Wild Horse Township including the town of Bogue and the Kebar area. Due to scope of work limitations, this study could not document the precise limits of a potental Nicodemus Rural Historic District. In fact, it is likely that determination of a precise boundary may remain an elusive goal. The geographical limits of the community of Nicodemus have changed, and will continue to change, as land ownership and occupation and land use patterns evolve over time.

Similarly, it has not been possible to determine the boundaries of the site as a traditional cultural property. At a minimum, the landscape that supports Homecoming activities and other ongoing traditions and activities that reaffirm the sense of a cohesive community should be included. The Township and other areas evidencing ongoing agriculture, the means to community self-sufficiency, may also fall within the boundary of the community as a traditional cultural property. Preparation of an Ethnographic Study and a Historic Resource Study will support determination of the community boundary.

POTENTIAL NICODEMUS ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT

Very little appears to have been written about known and potential archeological resources associated with either Nicodemus Township or the townsite. It is likely that both prehistoric and historic subsurface deposits exist throughout the region, which may have the potential to yield information that will supplement our existing knowledge of the history of the area.

Presently, a strong avenue for future archeological investigation involves the numerous sites where buildings and structures are known to have existed. For example, since NHL designation, the townsite has lost three historic buildings due to deterioration. These include

Sayers general store and post office, built in 1879 and razed in 1981; the D.L. Stewart residence, which was built in 1906 and collapsed in 1985, and the Masonic Hall, which was built in 1880 and razed in 1972. Once the focus of future archeological investigations has been determined, there will likely be numerous sites with the potential to yield important information about different aspects of the region's history.

As indicated above, there is likely a substantial amount of information about Nicodemus that could be recovered to yield new information about the late nineteenth and twentieth century cultural settlement and use of the landscape over time. Though the scope of this project did not include an archeological inventory, the CLR site physical history clearly indicates that a significant amount of structures and buildings do not survive from various periods of development and change. In particular, many resources associated with the early settlement of Nicodemus are no longer extant.

A potential Nicodemus archeological district would likely include numerous discontiguous sites scattered throughout the townsite, the Township, and other locations. The archeological record has a strong potential for enriching knowledge of the social, economic, and physical history and development of Nicodemus. One alternative would entail amending the existing National Register nomination to include the identified archeological sites and other features rather than separately nominating them.

OTHER POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT PROPERTIES AND RESOURCES

In addition to the five historic properties that comprise the Nicodemus NHS and the community of Nicodemus, several other summaries have suggested investigation of additional historic resources. The 1974 National Register nomination listed the site of the former Masonic Hall, Sayers general store and post office, an 'original town residence,' Dr. D. L. Stewart residence, and a 1970 historical marker erected by the Kansas State Historical Society as potentially significant resources. The 1974 nomination also noted a sod house [actually a dugout], about two miles east of the historic district that was significant to the history of Nicodemus. The 1993 Special Resources Study noted that the Baptist Parsonage and Jerry Scruggs residence might have potential significance as historic structures. Sayers general store and post office, Masonic Hall, the 'original town residence,' the Baptist Parsonage, and the Jerry Scruggs residence are no longer extant.

A 1997 Cultural Landscape Inventory conducted for Nicodemus NHS noted several other significant structures, features, and natural resources within the Nicodemus townsite and Township not discussed elsewhere. These include Fairview School District No. 78, an [Unknown] School District No. 27, Samuels Cemetery, Stockton Trail/White Way/North 40 Road, US Highway 24, and Red Line Road/South 40 Road. Other towns in Graham County, Kansas, with potential significance to the Nicodemus community included Roscoe, Millbrook, Gettysburg, Smithville, Hill City and Bogue. Additional potentially significant properties and resources will likely be identified through the preparation of an ethnographic study of Nicodemus.

THE ISSUE OF INTEGRITY

As a traditional cultural property, Nicodemus's period of significance would extend to the present for the foreseeable future as the community, and the tradition of Homecoming, continue to exist. The analysis that follows in the remainder of this chapter compares existing conditions with both the early townsite establishment period, and with twentieth century changes reflecting the ongoing activities of the community. The comparison, rather than resulting in a list of contributing resources, yields the identification of character-defining practices, activities, land uses, and features that reflect the ongoing traditions and traditional cultural values which arose during the nineteenth century. The comparative analysis supports an assessment of the integrity of the Nicodemus landscape by providing a sense of which resources and tangible qualities give the community its traditional identity, and how those might be affected by different types of change. Regarding integrity, National Register Bulletin 38 states that:

> In the case of a traditional cultural property, there are two fundamental questions to ask about integrity. First, does the property have an integral relationship to traditional cultural practices or beliefs; and second, is the condition of the property such that the relevant relationships survive.

Clearly, the landscape of Nicodemus Township, the townsite, and associated areas continues to be viewed and valued by the descendants of the community's early

settlers as a reflection of the purpose and meaning behind the exodus and settlement of their ancestors. The landscape is also viewed by descendants as the location where they have continuously maintained the historic identity of the community. In addition, although the landscape of the Township, townsite, and associated areas has changed since the late nineteenth century, the land use patterns, farm clusters, road systems, and towns continue to be understood and read by the descendants as connected with the early settlers.

The community of Nicodemus appears to retain a continuity of the values, hopes, and dreams that were integral to the goals of the early settlers. Owning land, farming, and maintaining a strong sense of independence, self-reliance, and familial bonds continue to characterize the community. As noted earlier, the continuity of certain events and traditions such as Homecoming are of great importance in maintaining a sense of traditional identity to all those who have ties to Nicodemus. Landscape resources, including family farms, the agricultural patchwork of the Township, the South Fork Solomon River, the townsite, the two church buildings and the District No. 1 Schoolhouse, Township Hall, former gathering places such as the Masonic Hall site and site of Ernestine's Bar-B-Q are both recognizable and of symbolic value.

Since the 1960s, some of the important buildings and structures within the townsite have been lost due to neglect. Township farmsteads have been abandoned. The population of the Township continues to decline at an alarming rate. As tangible evidence of reminders of the importance of familial bonds, agriculture, and the spirit of self-reliance, physical components and resources of the landscape are critical to the ability of the community to maintain the continuity of its traditional culture. Continued loss of resources clearly threatens the integrity of Nicodemus. As mentioned previously, loss of the community itself remains of paramount concern.

The impact of new resources on the integrity of older resources may also affect the traditional identity of Nicodemus. This statement, however, must be qualified. Changes that reflect the community's inherent need to evolve with the times will continue to be character-defining; changes that may be imposed from without, that reflect financial or social goals of outsiders have the greatest potential to affect Nicodemus integrity. For example, while dry land farming of smaller, family farms is character defining for Nicodemus, the ability of local farmers to keep up with improvements in equipment and techniques may allow them to survive. The implementation of contemporary farm practices, such as no-till, by local farmers does not detract from the integrity of the community. However, acquisition of a descendant's farm by a corporate entity and the establishment of a large hog farm on the property would detract. Changes such as the relocation of Homecoming from Scruggs's Grove to the townsite, while dramatic, do not serve to diminish the spirit of the occasion or its fundamental value.

It is also important to consider how the Nicodemus community views landscape change. There is a strong local tradition or practice, for example, of Nicodemus residents relocating buildings as needed. A more recent adaptation of this practice is the use of trailers or modular homes within the townsite as updated residences and accommodations for visiting family members. Though trailers may not be assessed as character defining by the CLR, the Nicodemus community may view this practice differently. For this living community, it is likely that virtually all that can be seen, as well as surviving archeological resources, may be viewed by members of the Nicodemus community as representative of their local traditions.

ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Introduction

Cultural landscape analyses and evaluations are typically undertaken to inform resource managers and to guide the development of landscape treatment recommendations. Cultural landscape analysis of NPS properties often take place within the context of a Cultural Landscape Report and therefore focuses on land areas and resources falling within the bounds of federally-owned land. In the case of Nicodemus, however, analysis of the cultural landscape has been influenced greatly by the following circumstances:

- little historic period primary source documentation was available to determine, in detail, the character of Nicodemus during the late nineteenth century. Without critical primary sources, photographs, and drawings, only a conjecture-based analysis of landscape change over time is possible;

- the period of significance for Nicodemus as a traditional cultural property runs from the early settlement and growth of the Nicodemus community beginning ca. 1877 through the present;

- given the extended period of significance identified above, evaluation of the integrity of the landscape is less important than the development of an understanding of character-defining features and systems. Rather than determining which features contribute or do not contribute to Nicodemus's historic landscape character, the analysis focused on identifying resources that post-date the early settlement period, 1877–1888, and on otherwise describing the community's character-defining resources and land uses.

The following sections include separate analyses undertaken at the Township, section/townsite, and NHS property levels. Each level of analysis includes a general overview of the site followed by a more detailed assessment by landscape by characteristic.

Analysis of the Nicodemus Township Landscape

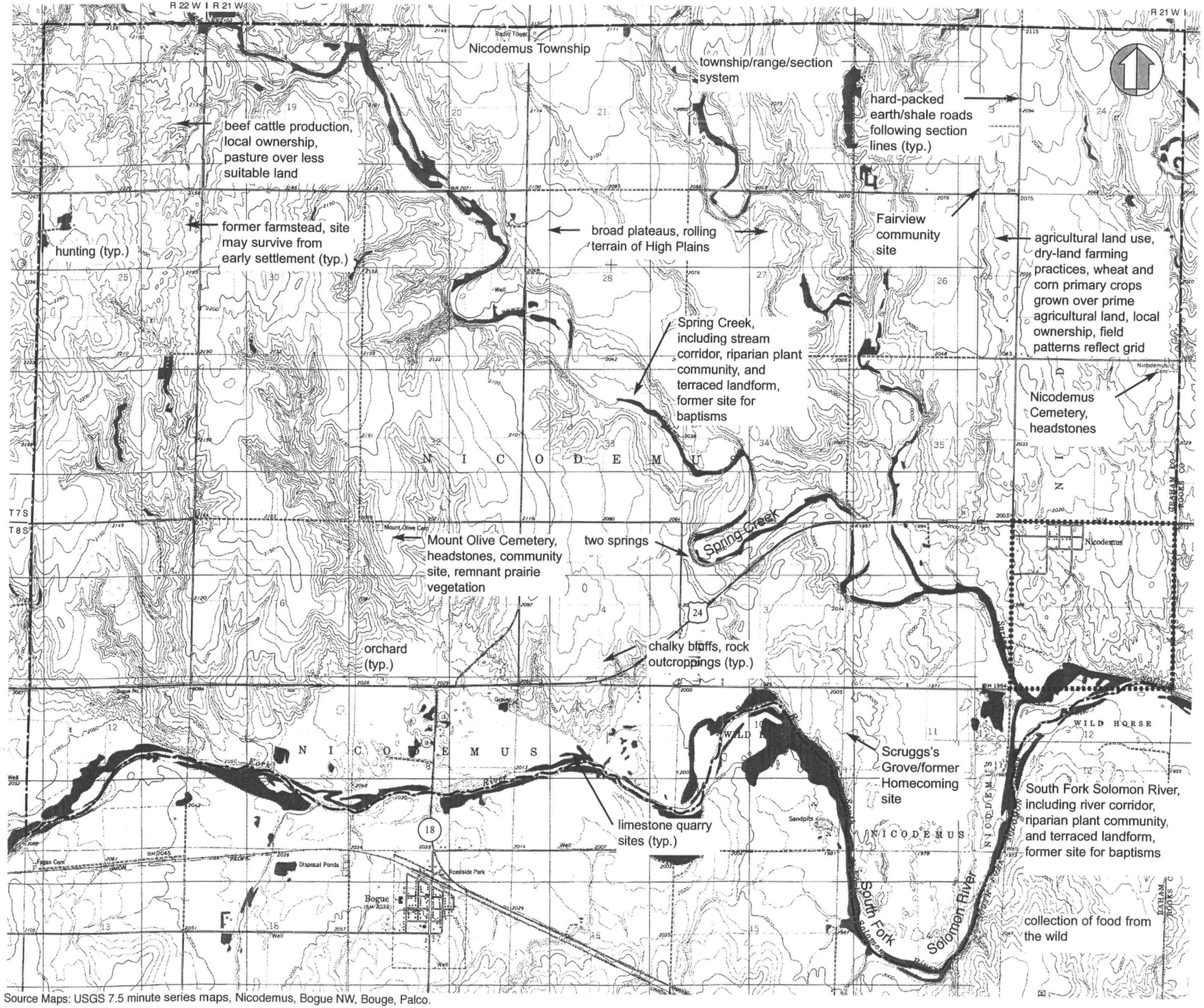
[See Map 132. Township features surviving from the early settlement period, with high interpretive potential.]

OVERVIEW ANALYSIS

As stated early in Chapter III,

> The defining characteristics of the community of Nicodemus relate as much to the common social and political history of a group of people and their familial bonds as they do to landscape and material culture. Even for those who have moved away, Nicodemus remains a "home place" for descendants and family members, a base that helps to anchor them. Many who choose to leave Nicodemus while raising a family, return in retirement. Events such as Homecoming, and visits by family members living elsewhere to attend reunions, funerals, or spend time during vacations help to renew the bonds and strengthen the emotional and physical connections to the townsite for these descendants. Nicodemus Township and the townsite can and should be viewed as the center or nucleus of a larger Nicodemus community linked with abutting parts of Wild Horse Township and Rooks County. The community of Nicodemus is an assemblage of sub-communities of settlers and their descendants linked together through a common history of enslavement, persecution, relocation, settlement, perseverance, and agricultural heritage. The Nicodemus community is also defined in part by a racial cohesiveness that was once characteristic of many Midwestern towns but is increasingly rare today.

In general, from a broader perspective, the larger agricultural landscape of Nicodemus Township appears to retain many of the landscape characteristics present during the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century.



Source Maps: USGS 7.5 minute series maps, Nicodemus, Bogue NW, Bouge, Palco.

Legend

- Township Boundary
- Section 1 Boundary
- Improved Roads
- Local Unimproved Roads
- Tree Cover

One Mile
Contour Interval = 10 ft

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
TOWNSHIP RESOURCES SURVIVING FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT PERIOD, WITH HIGH INTERPRETIVE POTENTIAL

Figure 132.
Township features surviving from the early settlement period, with high interpretive potential.

Topography and landform are relatively unchanged, ranging from relatively level to gently rolling, with steeper slopes associated with the margins of drainage, stream, and river corridors. The central and easternmost portions of Nicodemus Township continue to be more uniformly composed of an upland terrace incised by riparian and drainage corridors. Land use over time has not resulted in major land modifications with the exception of contemporary highway construction, open mines or borrow pits, and soil erosion.

From the tops of knolls and plateaus, long and broad views of the surrounding countryside are still afforded; there is little tree cover or other obstructions to obscure these views. Towns, such as Nicodemus and Bogue, continue to be visually prominent from high points, set as they are within large expanses of open agricultural fields. One of the greatest changes in these views since the early 1900s is the addition of the tall municipal water tower columns in these towns.

Nineteenth century land and boundary demarcations, such as roads, landcover changes, and fencelines, associated with the township/range/section land division system are still quite evident. Missing, however, are Township school buildings and churches, and various informal paths and trails that cut across fields during the settlement period as reported in oral history accounts.

It is also likely that the landscape's primary hydrologic patterns and watercourses—South Fork Solomon River and Spring Creek—remain generally unchanged from the early settlement period, although the water quality of these systems is known to have declined, and it is likely that the regularity of flow has been impacted by agriculture. Some small drainageways have been lost due to agricultural practices such as tilling and terracing. The addition of farm ponds and other farm-related impoundments appears to be a mid-twentieth century addition to the Nicodemus landscape.

Though tree cover within the Township is extremely sparse (due to climate and geographical factors, low average rainfall, and agricultural land use impacts), oral histories support the theory that there is greater tree cover today than at any time during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. The majority of contemporary tree cover is concentrated along the drainage, stream, and river corridors, and in the vicinity of former and current house and farm complex sites. General Land Office survey notes dating from 1869 suggest that tree cover was quite limited in the region, except along stream and river corridors, during the nineteenth century. Oral history accounts of the early to mid-twentieth century landscape suggest that tree cover remained extremely sparse during that time. The degree to which the stream and river corridors are edged by tree cover appears to have markedly increased during the second half of the twentieth century. Another major vegetative change is the addition of ornamental plantings and windbreak plantings within the townsite.

Roads traverse the Township in orthogonal alignments that approximate the grid of the sections, although they do not always follow section lines. For the most part, these roads occur every mile in both an east-west and north-south direction; they are predominantly surfaced with shale or are formed from hard-packed earth, as they have been since the nineteenth century. Some include earthen ditches, concrete culverts, and/or concrete bridge crossings of streams and drainages. During the nineteenth century, these hard-packed earth roads were maintained using horse-drawn equipment. Today, of course, they are maintained using gas-powered machinery. Review of conjectural HABS drawings of the Township during the early settlement period indicates that roads may have followed the majority of the section lines at that time, that in fact roads may have been more numerous than today. The most dramatic change in the road network within the Township during the twentieth century is the realignment and improvement of US Highway 24 and the development of State Route 18.

Methods and materials for fencing appears to remain substantially unchanged since the late nineteenth century, although little is known about specific fencing characteristics during the early settlement period. Fencing, made of barbed wire or wire, has characterized Township property lines, and road and field margins potentially since the late nineteenth century. Metal posts, used today, post-date the early settlement period. Entrances to farm properties sometimes include cattle guards in conjunction with fencing. The date of origin of these features is not currently known.

In general, the larger patterns of land use and development remain consistent with patterns established as the community of Nicodemus developed late in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Farm clusters, both active and abandoned, continue to dot the Township and represent the majority of cultural features within the area. Though specific patterns have likely changed over time, open agricultural lands

continue to include cropland and grass fields for pasturing livestock. As in the past, features associated with these farmsteads typically include a combination of dwellings, barns, and other outbuildings. More contemporary structures include a radio tower in the northern portion of the Township, oil drilling rigs and wells, and concrete bridges and culverts associated with roadways. Sod dwellings and dugouts, and even privies, have all but disappeared from the Nicodemus landscape.

Mount Olive Cemetery is located west of Spring Creek and approximately two miles north of Bogue. Nicodemus Cemetery is located in the far northeastern corner of the section north of the Nicodemus townsite. These cemeteries, with graves that date from the late nineteenth through the twentieth centuries, are relatively open, grassy fields enclosed by wire perimeter fences, dotted with granite head- and footstones, and containing a grid planting of cedar trees. Little information has been located to reveal the character of these cemeteries during the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. It is likely that, with the exception of additional graves and the relatively high level of care that is currently taken in maintaining the cemeteries, they otherwise continue to exhibit characteristics present during the early settlement period.

ANALYSIS BY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTIC

Environmental Setting

Nicodemus Township generally retains the environmental setting characteristic of the early settlement period. Character-defining features and qualities include the corridors of the South Fork Solomon River and Spring Creek, etched into abutting steeply-sloped embankments, and edged by relatively level open terraces and plateaus dotted with rock outcroppings. The primary change that has occurred within this broad view of the local environmental setting is the greater extent of woody growth that now occupies the margins of the stream corridors.

- river and terrace system of the South Fork Solomon River corridor and its tributaries:
  Though this is a dynamic system subject to change owing to natural and human forces and impacts, a review of various late nineteenth and early twentieth century maps and surveys indicates that the system likely remains substantially unchanged since the early settlement period of significance. Riparian tree cover, however, does appear to have increased to a great extent since early settlement. Early settlers described a generally treeless landscape when they first arrived, and then a flurry of growth when prairie fires were no longer set by local indigenous peoples. Woody growth was subsequently used by early settlers for fuel, depleting the tree cover along the stream corridor. The river corridor was considered public land by local residents, who grazed and ran their cattle there. It is likely, however, that water levels are today lower due to contemporary farming practices such as terracing and irrigation, and that water quality has been negatively affected by agriculture.

- two springs:
  A 1952 map of Graham County showing the location of springs indicates the presence of one spring within the Township. This spring is shown in the west-central portion of the Township. No springs were observed during field investigations conducted for this project. Local residents, when asked about the presence of springs within the Township, noted that there are two springs along the banks of Spring Creek. These springs are not shown on the 1952 map; the spring indicated on the map was not mentioned by local residents.

- water course and riparian corridor system of Spring Creek and its tributaries:
  Though this is a dynamic system subject to change due to natural and human forces, a review of various late nineteenth and early twentieth century maps and surveys indicates that the alignment and basic configuration of the system remains substantially unchanged since the early settlement period. It is likely, however, that water levels are lower due to contemporary farming practices such as terracing and irrigation, and that water quality has been negatively affected by agriculture. Woody growth was subsequently used by early settlers for fuel, depleting the tree cover along the stream corridor.

- rock outcroppings:
  Rock outcroppings are located primarily along the South Fork Solomon River corridor, with a few visible elsewhere within the Township. Some of these outcroppings may have emerged as a result of land cultivation, but generally they appear to survive from the early settlement period. The "magnesia" or limestone that comprises these outcroppings along the riverbanks was used locally to construct

buildings and other features during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Evidence of past quarrying may exist along the banks of the river, although none was observed during field investigations conducted for this project.

- broad plateaus and system of gently rolling terrain of ridges and knolls and narrow valleys:
  Landscape analysis indicates that no significant large-scale land modifications have taken place within the Township since early settlement.

- wetland areas and systems associated with drainage, stream, and river corridors:
  Very little information has been identified by the project team to determine the nature of wetland areas and systems since early settlement. As discussed earlier, most water resources appear similar in nature to those that existed during the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, although some intermittent drainageways appear to have been lost to tilling and crop farming.

Responses to Natural Features and Systems

Responses to natural features and systems that are character-defining for Nicodemus include: road-related drainage systems such as ditches and swales; local farming practices such as dry-land cropping, the primacy of wheat and corn crops, the raising of beef cattle, and the maintenance of small, family-run farms; the collection and use of food sources from the wild, and quarried stone as a building material; and the use of wells as a source of drinking water.

The early settlement period was marked by the establishment of a new community by individuals that depended to a great extent on the resources available and accessible from their environment. Initial responses to natural features and systems encompassed the use of native construction materials—including sod, wood from limited sources, and local limestone—to construct dwellings and businesses. Although milled lumber became readily available in the 1880s, these practices continued into the second quarter of the twentieth century. Few examples of sod or local limestone construction survive as evidence of these early settlement practices, however.

Early settlers also depended upon locally available materials for fuel, including wood collected from the South Fork Solomon River corridor, cowchips collected from pasturelands, and corncobs and sunflower husks from crop planting. Coal imported from other regions of the country became more readily available and used during the 1920s. Although coal and other fossil fuels slowly replaced these local sources, during the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl years many local residents relied on whatever was available to survive. Propane tanks exist on many of the properties within the Township today to serve heating needs.

In addition to agriculture, food was secured through hunting of wildlife and fishing for fish, turtles, and freshwater mussels in the South Fork Solomon River. During the nineteenth century, some settlers also collected buffalo bones, which they could sell. Today, agriculture remains the predominant land use within the area, and hunting is a popular recreational practice.

Ice was acquired in the winter from the South Fork Solomon River. In addition, most farmsteads included root cellars or underground storage areas to preserve food. Evidence of these root cellars likely survives within the Township. Drilled wells have replaced the hand-dug wells that were an important part of the early settlement landscape.

More recent examples of responses to natural resources and systems without precedence in the early settlement period include the establishment of farm ponds and the application of new farming techniques that respond to water conservation needs. A 1952 map of Graham County showing the location of wells, springs, and water-table contours indicates the locations of ten domestic and stock wells within the Township at that time. The dates of origin of these wells are not known, or whether they survive.

- bridge and low-water crossings of waterways and drainages:
  Existing bridges and fords all appear to be mid- to late twentieth century structures constructed of concrete. It is not currently known what methods or features were established to facilitate stream and river crossings during the early settlement period.

- road-related drainage systems including ditches, swales, and culverts:
  Though most of the existing culverts, constructed of concrete with metal pipes, appear to date from the

mid-twentieth century and later, many of the graded ditch and drainage systems that edge the public roadways likely date from 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s when mechanical equipment began to be used to construct, repair, and maintain roads. During the Depression, many of the roads were upgraded and maintained as Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the major roads in Nicodemus Township were graded and ditched using a horse-drawn grader.

- windbreak plantings associated with house and farm complexes:
  Windbreak plantings observed during fieldwork appeared to be no more than thirty-to-fifty years old. The United States Department of Agriculture promoted the planting of windbreaks during the 1930s after dust storms had begun to ravage farmland across the Midwest; between 1937 and 1938, shelterbelts and windbreaks were planted by the WPA or Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) throughout Kansas to reduce wind strength and hold soils in place. It is not known whether existing windbreaks survive from the WPA era or earlier. More recently, the Conservation Service has provided incentives to plant trees, a cost-share program for windbreaks to shelter residences and to support wildlife.

  A federal program titled the "Timber Culture Act," passed in 1873, offered people who planted trees over a prescribed amount of acreage title to 80 or 160 acres. Claims had to be "proved up" within ten years, similar to the Homestead Act claims. Landowners could claim additional land if 40 acres or more of their land was planted in timber. The acreage requirement was reduced to 10 acres in 1878. Review of Township records has not revealed the names of any residents who might have taken advantage of the act. Existing woodlots appear to post-date the early settlement period.

- local farming practices:
  Since early settlement, local farmers have grown a variety of crops for sale and for personal consumption. During the early twentieth century, advances in the scientific practice of farming were promoted to area farmers through state agencies and as part of locally-initiated educational efforts within the Township, namely at the Sturgeon Farm and School Farm, initiating a community tradition of adopting contemporary farming methods when practical.

As a result of poor agricultural harvests during the 1930s, regional farmers began to switch from corn to more drought resistant crops including wheat, milo, barley and rye. Prior to the mid-twentieth century, the primary cash crop was wheat. Although other small grains including sorghum, cane, sedan, barley, rye, milo, and milo-maize have been grown within the Township for many years, most of these crops have served as feed for livestock and fowl. Productivity in the 1940s and 1950s, which were generally good crop years, was enhanced by the increasingly widespread use of fertilizers. An *Ebony* magazine article in 1950 reported that "the thing that keeps Nicodemus alive today is wheat....Nicodemus would probably be completely deserted today if good wheat crops at good prices in the past ten years [decade of the 1940s] had not come along to give the farmers new hope....Wheat is the principal crop but smart farmers do not depend upon wheat alone for their income. Barley, maize, and corn are planted and lately most farmers raise beef or dairy heads to guarantee an income when the wheat fails."[26] While practiced by fewer individuals, mixed grain farming continues to dominate the Township landscape today.

Commenting during this project's oral history component on the differences between former and contemporary farming practices within the Township, local farmer Gil Alexander noted that "a lot of the land now is terraced to prevent runoff. A lot of the guys are going to more of a 'no-till' operation, which I'm kind of experimenting with. Basically it's treating the ground with chemicals to control the weeds, and planting....like last year's wheat stubble we leave standing to collect whatever snow might blow over it to conserve moisture....and just plant right in there at existing stubble." Modern farming methods aimed at retaining moisture have been important to many Township farmers because few used irrigation. "We're dry land farmers....We don't have any irrigation....well there is some irrigation around us, but predominantly this area is dry-land farming." A direct result of the modern farming practices is a decrease in the level of the water in the Solomon. "Even though it looks flat here, there's a grade to the land....the land kind of gradually goes down to the river. And terracing holds back the moisture. After a big

26 'Wheat Town,' in *Ebony* (1950): 27-28.

rain, you can just see water standing in the terraces that otherwise would be running to whatever creek, which would run to the river."[27] In 1951, Graham County experienced one of the worst floods in its history. After this flood, local farmers began to construct holding ponds and terraces to retain the rainwater in their fields rather than letting it run off.

In addition to growing crops, local farmers have typically raised dairy cows, hogs, and fowl, some for personal consumption, others to sell. Numerous farm families also took care of hundreds or sometimes thousands of chickens and turkeys as commercial ventures. Turkeys were fattened all year long and sold in bulk before major holidays. Dairy cows provided milk and cream, products that could be both consumed and sold at local markets. Many farmers did their own butchering of cattle and hogs. The meat would then be smoked or salted for preservation. At butchering time, families would often share what they had with their neighbors. The increased popularity and accessibility of the automobile throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and the gradual improvement of county roads, allowed area farmers to bring perishable produce to market faster. The two closest markets to Nicodemus were in Bogue and Hill City. A major sale barn for cows, hogs, chickens and turkeys existed in Hill City. Saleable farm produce was regularly hauled into town each weekend for 'trading.' Often farms also had a meat or smoke house used for preserving meats, and a separator house or cellar where milk and cream were stored.

Up through the first half of the twentieth century most agricultural work was accomplished with horsepower. Teams turning the fields for sowing and during harvest time pulled headers, threshing machines, and shellers. Sometime during the mid- to late 1930s, farmers in the Township first began to purchase tractors, but most continued to use horsepower. In fact, it was not until the mid- to late 1940s that a majority of Nicodemus area farms became mechanized. Ultimately the transition from horsepower to mechanized farming was an individual decision, largely dependent upon the scale of farming practiced.

- farming operations, terracing:
  Agricultural terracing is associated with cultivation using mechanical equipment and post-dates the early settlement period.

- farming operations, pasture on slopes and within drainageways:
  Use of relatively steep-sloped areas for pastureland and grazing of livestock likely began during the early settlement period and continues to the present. Beef cattle have been the dominant stock animal within the Township since early settlement. Currently, pasture covers approximately 34 percent of Graham County; 99 percent of that land is used for beef cattle. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, horses, mules, hogs, and various types of fowl were also raised. Today, some local farmers raise chickens and other types of livestock but primarily for personal consumption.

- farming operations, crops located on more level and gently sloped lands:
  Documentary evidence indicates that the majority of the gently sloped lands have been cultivated since the early settlement period.

- local food sources:
  Wild animals hunted or collected for meat since at least the early twentieth century, and likely dating to early settlement has included fish, turtles, freshwater mussels, and jack rabbits. Skunk oil was used as a local medicinal remedy. Berries and other fruits, as well as edible greens, have been collected in fields, pastures, and along the rivers.

- grist milling:
  Traditionally there have not been grist mills located within the Township. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, local farmers took their grain to Logan for milling, and later there were also mills in Hill City and Osborn. During the 1920s, one Township farmer owned a corn grinder, which other local farmers used. Currently, there is a local group of farmers involved in the development of a project to mill flour and sell pancake flour and dough products that are marketed in conjunction with the Nicodemus story.

- windmills:
  Windmills observed during fieldwork all appear to date from the mid-twentieth century. Oral histories indicate that windmills became fairly common within the Township after 1900 as smaller and

[27] Interview with Gil Alexander, 4/19/2001, 168, 178, Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

cheaper models became available to Kansas farmers,[28] but were utilized primarily to draw well water for livestock. Even after electricity became available to the community in the 1950s, windmills were sometimes used to generate electricity.

- water tanks, agricultural irrigation systems:
  These systems and features appear to be relatively recent additions to the landscape.

- farm ponds, tanks (small ponds for watering livestock):
  Historic period documentation did not indicate whether there were any farm ponds or other related types of impoundments within the Township during the early settlement period, or prior to the 1950s when devastating floods led to the construction locally of farm ponds to control stormwater.

- sand and gravel borrow pits:
  Primary source maps dating to 1906 indicate the presence of gravel pits in the vicinity of Nicodemus along the South Fork Solomon River corridor. USGS maps dating from the 1960s to 1980s also indicate the presence of gravel pits within the Township. It is not known whether any of the identified pits were used as a source of construction materials during the early settlement period.

- quarried stone for use as a construction material:
  During the early settlement period and into the twentieth century, local limestone was quarried from outcroppings along the river. It was cut, dressed into blocks, and hauled by sled or wagon to the construction site. Few examples of early stonework survive within the townsite, and it is not currently known whether there are any buildings within the Township that are constructed of local limestone.

- ice:
  During the early settlement period and well into the twentieth century, ice was cut from the creek and river and stored for use in food preservation.

- oil drilling rigs, wells:
  Research did not yield any information on oil wells and drilling rigs dating to the early settlement period. The Township's few drilling rigs and oil wells likely date to one of the speculative periods of oil exploration in the region during the 1930s, 1950s, and 1980s.

- dump sites:
  Though small debris and dump sites were observed during fieldwork, the dates of origin of these features could not be determined. However, dump and debris sites have likely existed within the Township since the early settlement period. Early dump sites may provide constitute valuable archeological resources.

- in-ground feed storage:
  These contemporary features are created by mechanical equipment. It is not likely that similar means for feed storage were present during the early settlement period.

- drinking-water wells:
  It is likely that all potable water wells currently in use are drilled wells. Drilled wells are of twentieth century origin, and replace the hand-dug wells that would have been used by most of the land owners within the Township during the early settlement period to generate water for the farmsteads. It is not known whether any of these early hand-dug wells survive.

- designated hunting lands:
  Though the date of origin of state-designated hunting lands has not been determined, it is unlikely that these designations were in place during the early settlement period. Hunting, which has been a popular pastime and a source of food within the Township since early settlement, has more traditionally been conducted with the personal permission of the landowner.

- channelized drainageways and agricultural-drainage ditch systems:
  Fieldwork and analysis of contemporary maps resulted in the identification of what appeared to be channelized drainageways and ditches located within the low terraces proximate to the South Fork Solomon River. The dates of origin of such systems has not been determined.

[28] Fly, 'Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas.' Interview with Ada and Alvin Bates, 1983, 9; Fly, 'Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas.' Interview with G. Irwin Sayers and Minerva W. R. M. Sayers, 1983, 8; Fly, 'Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas.' Interview with Juanita W. Redd, 1983, 18. By the mid- to late 1880s, most wells across Kansas were dug mechanically by steam or horse-powered drills.

Patterns of Spatial Organization

Character-defining patterns of spatial organization within the Township include: broad expanses of agricultural fields on upland plateaus and ridge systems; narrow to wide riparian corridors; township/range/section land division system evident in orthogonal road alignments, field patterns, fencelines, and hedgerows; and farm clusters within open agricultural lands.

The underlying topography and geology of the Nicodemus Township landscape and the natural systems it supports have continually shaped the cultural environment of the region since the early settlement period. The existing patterns of spatial organization and land uses within the Township exhibit a direct relationship to natural and topographic features such as soils, water resources, landform, slope, and the opportunities afforded by these elements to practice agriculture and extract natural resources.

Also of great importance to the existing patterns of spatial organization is the township/range/section system of land division established throughout the Midwest during the nineteenth century. This gridded system has had a profound influence on the configuration of land ownership, road orientation, and the cultural landscape features that respond to these conditions, such as fencelines, utility lines, and field patterns.

Nicodemus Township also retains the expansive agrarian landscape that was characteristic of early settlement, including rectilinear patches of open cropland and pasture covering the plateaus and ridges, roads following orthogonal alignments along section lines, periodic farmstead clusters of buildings and outbuildings with associated windbreaks, and the curvilinear forms of the perennial stream corridors. Changes that reflect twentieth century alterations to the early settlement landscape include an increase in trees and woody growth along the stream corridors and in association with farmsteads, shifts in the texture of crop fields due to mechanized farm equipment and the use of terracing to conserve water, and the establishment of farm ponds during the twentieth century. Finally, the various satellite communities that developed in the Township during the early settlement period have disappeared. These communities formed tight clusters of buildings and associated features along the roadways. This pattern does not survive.

- broad expanses of agricultural fields on upland plateaus and ridge systems:
  This spatial characteristic, extant at the time of early settlement, survives to the present.

- narrow to wide wooded riparian corridors:
  In general these systems, extant at the time of early settlement, survive to the present. However, the riparian wooded areas were far less wooded at the time of settlement, believed to have been eliminated through the prairie burning practices of American Indians.

- township/range/section system evident in orthogonal road alignments, field patterns, fencelines, and hedgerows:
  These patterns, evident during early settlement, survive.

- farm clusters with associated windbreak and tree clusters within open agricultural lands:
  A 1906 period map indicates the presence of numerous farm clusters within the Township. The number of farm clusters appears to have diminished since 1906. Although insufficient information is known about the dates of origin of windbreak plantings and other tree and shrub plantings associated with Township farmsteads, this practice likely post-dates the early settlement period. Despite federal incentives available at that time to establish woodlots, it appears that Township residents were unable or unwilling to take advantage of them.

- spaces and corridors created by abutting crops of differing heights:
  This characteristic by nature is ephemeral yet inherent in many crop farming practices. It is likely that this spatial character has been evident since early settlement.

Boundary Demarcations

The Nicodemus Township landscape is comprised of numerous individually-owned properties. Obviously ownership of these parcels has changed to varying degrees since early settlement. It is not currently known to what extent the nineteenth century parcel configurations survive, or how many properties continue to be owned by descendants of the original owners. Generally, however, the landscape features that have served to mark boundaries continue to include roads, fences, field margins, and stream and river corridors. Since early settlement, the boundaries of the Township have remained the same, and have included orthogonal section and county lines to the north, east, and west. The southern boundary of the Township has remained the South Fork Solomon River.

- South Fork Solomon River:
  This river corridor continues to define the Township's southern boundary.

- roads:
  Roads in many cases follow section lines and form a public corridor between property owners. Many of the existing Township roads appear to follow alignments that were established during the early settlement period.

- fencelines and hedgerows:
  Fencelines, which likely began to form the edges of properties, crop fields, and pastureland during the early settlement period, continue to define property boundaries. It is not currently known which, if any, existing fencelines are consistent with fencelines extant during the early settlement period.

- field patterns:
  Field patterns, generally orthogonal in form, continue to define the character of property boundaries and retain a character similar to that established during early settlement.

Vegetation

Vegetation that is character-defining within Nicodemus Township includes the riparian communities associated with the South Fork Solomon River and Spring Creek, crop fields, pastureland, vegetable gardens in association with farmsteads, sites for collecting wild plants for food and medicine, remnant prairie vegetation, and, to a limited degree, orchards.

Prior to early settlement, the Nicodemus Township landscape was described by GLO surveyors in the 1860s as prairie characteristic of low average rainfall areas, dominated by prairie grasses, legumes, and forbs, with very little woody vegetation of note. It is likely that the vegetation was manipulated at least to a degree by fires set by American Indians, and that the woody growth that is now prevalent along water courses would have been discouraged by these fires. During the early settlement period, Nicodemus residents broke the prairie sod and established crop fields and pasture over the majority of the Township. Crop fields, grassy pastures, and vestiges of native prairie along the margins of crop fields and pasture characterized the Township during the early settlement period, and remain prevalent today. The increase in woody growth along the stream and river corridors noted during oral histories collected for this project is a relatively recent change.

- riparian vegetation systems including tree cover along drainage, stream, and river corridors:
  Though likely more extensive today than during the early settlement period, these systems appear to remain substantially unchanged. Fruits that have historically been collected from the trees and shrubs growing along the creek and river corridors include wild plums, grapes, mulberries, and chokecherries.

- crop fields:
  The extent and general character of cultivated lands and associated crop cover remains substantially unchanged from the early settlement period. Since the nineteenth century, wheat and corn have been the primary cash crops, grown through dry-land farming practices, with millet, sorghum, oats, hay, and rice corn also grown in some quantity. Rye was grown during the early twentieth century, but its use was abandoned after it was found to interfere with other crops. Wheat and corn continue to be grown within the Township, but soybeans are becoming popular. Alfalfa is also grown on various farms today. Corn and wheat crops vary in their dominance based on the availability of rainfall.

- vegetable gardens:
  Historically, during the early settlement period, vegetable gardens were used to grow Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, beans, peas, and tomatoes. During the early twentieth century, vegetable gardens continue to be in evidence within the Township in association with farmsteads. Many residents currently grow corn, cabbage, watermelon,

beets, turnips, carrots, cantaloupe, okra, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, pumpkins, black-eyed peas, and beans, primarily for personal consumption.

- wild plants collected for food and medicine and other uses:
  There are various plants that have been described by residents since the early twentieth century as the focus of collection from the wild for food or medicinal purposes. The wild plants collected for food include wild tomatoes, onions, lamb's quarters, poke, mustard, lettuce, dandelion, pigweed, tiny risson, thistle shoots, narrow dock, and wild cactus for preserves and pickles. Fruits collected from the wild have traditionally included wild plums, grapes, mulberries, and chokecherries. Wild plants collected for medicinal purposes include asafoetida, quinine, and snakeroot. Soapweed, a forb with a showy cluster of white flowers has traditionally been used to decorate graves locally. These practices likely existed during the early settlement period as well.

- grass fields and pastureland:
  The extent and general character of grass fields and pasture lands remain substantially unchanged from the early settlement period.

- remnant prairie vegetation:
  Prairie grasses and forbs continue to occupy locations within the Township that are not subject to cultivation, such as the cemeteries and road and creek margins.

- hedgerows:
  Research yielded little information on hedgerows. Hedgerows per se are not generally characteristic of the Township, and exist infrequently within unmanaged areas between ownership patterns.

- windbreaks:
  Research yielded little information on windbreaks. Existing windbreaks appear to post-date the early settlement period.

- orchards:
  Research indicates that farms included fruit trees for farm use. Apple, peach, pear, and wild plum trees were the primary species planted locally. Without supplemental water, however, these trees often do not survive. The only known surviving fruit and nut orchard plantings include a walnut grove and pear and crabapple orchard on Veryl Switzer's property to the southwest of the Nicodemus townsite near the former site of Scruggs's Grove.

- woodlots:
  There is a lack of documentary evidence concerning upland woodlots prior to the beginning of the twentieth century. Woodlots thus appear to post-date the early settlement period. It is not known how many farmers, if any, planted windbreaks or woodlots during the early settlement period. Many of the woodlots in Kansas were established as tree claims. Preliminary investigation has not yielded information about Nicodemus Township residents establishing tree claims.

- ornamental plantings associated with house sites and towns:
  Though most extant ornamental plantings date to the mid- to late twentieth century, it is possible that there may be specimen trees that date to the late nineteenth century.

Land Uses and Infrastructure

The primary land uses associated with the Township are similar to those established during the early settlement period, including cemetery, agricultural (crop land, pastureland, and fallow fields), residential, and recreational. The loss of two features—Mount Olive Church, and District No. 26 Schoolhouse—that were part of the early settlement landscape has resulted in a lack of institutional land uses within the Township.

- cemetery—Mount Olive and Nicodemus:
  The Mount Olive and Nicodemus Cemeteries were established during the early settlement period and continue to be used for burials today.

- agricultural—cropland:
  Though some farms today appear either in decline or not operational, the majority of the Township appears to be in cultivation or in pasture, as during the early settlement period.

- agricultural—pastureland:
  As noted above, although there are some farms that appear unoccupied within the Township, the majority of land appears to be in cultivation or in pasture, as during the early settlement period.

- agricultural—fallow fields:
  During field investigations within the Township, many fallow fields were observed. It is not known to what degree there were fallow fields within the Township during the early settlement period.

- agricultural—irrigation systems, windmills:
  Contemporary irrigation systems and associated field patterns that post-date the early settlement period were observed in low areas proximate to the South Fork Solomon River Corridor.

- agricultural—farm and livestock support facilities:
  Many highly developed farm complexes were observed during field investigations for this project. Except in the case of abandoned farms, many of these facilities appeared to date from the mid- to late twentieth century and post-date the early settlement period.

- utility—electrical, telephone, and cable TV lines and corridors:
  Overhead electric service and telephone lines run along many roads and other locations. These post-date the early settlement period.

- utility—drinking water wells, water supply tanks:
  Drilled wells and water supply tanks post-date the early settlement period.

- transmission—radio tower:
  The existing radio tower post-dates the early settlement period.

- residential:
  In addition to farm residences, non-farm related dwellings were observed. Most, if not all, occupied farm and non-farm dwellings appeared to be mid- to late twentieth century structures.

- commercial:
  Few commercial structures were observed. Of the structures observed, most appeared to be mid- to late twentieth century structures.

- industrial—sand and gravel pit mines, oil wells and associated support facilities, dumps:
  Of the observed industrial uses, most appeared to post-date the early settlement period.

- recreational—hunting areas, sports- or ballfields, and swimming holes exist within the Township. While these land uses survive from the early settlement period, it is not clear whether the precise locations where these activities currently take place are consistent with those that were in use during the early settlement period.

Circulation

Very little is known about Township circulation patterns and features during the early settlement period. However, it appears that many of the hard-packed earth and shale-topped roads that follow section lines within the Township were established during the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. These roads are character-defining elements of the community.

In 1887, Graham County declared that all section lines be established as roads with sixty foot rights-of-ways. It is possible, but not confirmed, that many of the existing road corridors survive from this effort. An 1886 map of the County indicates that there was also a major route that connected Nicodemus with Hill City at the time. This road from the townsite due west to the Township line. By 1906 there were two major roads that lead east-west between Nicodemus and Hill City. The second led south along the western edge of the townsite until it reached the river, and then turned and ran due west. Another important route ran north from the townsite to the "Old Stockton Trail" and then east to Stockton. None of these routes survive today. They have been replaced by US Highway 24 and State Route 18.

- US Highway 24, graded and asphalt paved:
  Sections of this highway follow one of the primary roads that existed during the early settlement period. The road surface, width, and much of the current horizontal alignment reflect mid- to late twentieth century changes to the original road.

- remnant road grades and paved segments associated with western section US Highway 24:
  Road traces are evident to the north of US Highway 24 at the western end of the Township. The date of origin of the road traces has not been determined.

- unimproved roads; graded and drained roads:
  Many, if not all, of these existing roads were documented on a 1906 period map, and may survive from the early settlement period.

- gravel or crushed stone/shale road, graded and drained:
  Many, if not all, of these existing roads were documented on a 1906 period map, and may survive from the early settlement period. However, the surface of these roads most likely post-dates the early settlement period.

- access drives and roads to residences and farm complexes and facilities and vehicle tracks and access routes within agricultural lands:
  It has not been possible to determine which, if any, access drives and roads to residences and farm complexes survive from the early settlement period.

- trails and paths:
  No documentation was identified to determine the dates of origin of this type of circulation. It is important to note that research yielded references to early settlement path systems that did follow the grid of section lines. The CLR team was unable to determine if any of these early trails survive.

Buildings and Structures, and Clusters

Review of the maps prepared by HABS in 1983 suggests that at that time there remained four abandoned dwellings within the Township that potentially survived from the early settlement period. These include house sites on the properties owned by Cynthia Witman and Ja Vanek, Ruth Finney et. al, the Bethel Family Trust, and Stehno Farms. It is not currently known whether any of these structures survives today.

During the early settlement period, many of the residential structures built within the Township were dugouts and sod-ups constructed of sod, wood, and limestone. Examples of these early sod residences may survive along the bluffs overlooking the South Fork Solomon River; surviving examples would be important resources for understanding the early settlement period. By the mid- to late 1880s, dwellings, schools, and churches constructed of wood and stone also began to appear within the Township. Schools were built to support the Fairview and Mount Olive communities. In 1887, the original sod church at Mount Olive was replaced by a stone structure. As noted above, it appears unlikely that there are any buildings within the Township that survive from the early settlement period.

The presence of residential buildings and outbuilding and farm buildings, despite their age, is character-defining within the Township. Other features, including remote silos, a radio tower, windmills, oil drilling rigs, electrical power sub-stations, and large-scale above-ground irrigation systems post-date the early settlement period and are generally not character-defining components of the community.

Small-scale Features and Systems

Character-defining small-scale features within the Township appear to include fences and cemeteries foot and headstones. The dates of origin for many of the existing small-scale features observed during field investigations for this project have not been possible to determine. It is highly likely that most, if not all, post-date the early settlement period, with the exception of the older foot- and headstones within the cemeteries. Those fencelines that may follow the alignment of early settlement fencelines have likely been rebuilt during the twentieth century, although their presence is character-defining. (Many of the small-scale features assessed below have been grouped together to simplify the analysis for the reader.)

- cemetery head and footstones:
  Many of the older gravestones within the two cemeteries may survive from the early settlement period.

- barbed-wire fencing;

- wood post and rail fencing;

- metal gates;

- cattle guards;

- livestock- and other agriculturally-oriented features and systems;

- irrigation equipment and systems;

- irrigation equipment and systems;

- decorative residential yard features;

- bird houses and boxes;

- mailboxes;

- directional, informational, and regulatory signs and sign systems;

- painted tire signs:
  Observed examples of these features appear to post-date the early settlement period, although it is possible that some fencing, or fencing locations, may survive from the early settlement period.

Cultural Traditions

Character-defining cultural traditions include Emancipation Celebration/Homecoming; Decoration Day; wild food collection and hunting; local farming practices; and the relocation of buildings to accommodate new uses.

- Emancipation/Homecoming Celebration in Nicodemus:
  This celebration, which has been held in Nicodemus almost annually since 1878, has evolved from a way to mark the emancipation of West Indies slaves to a reaffirmation of community heritage and continuity. Attended by local persons as well as family members, descendants, and others with connections to Nicodemus that come from around the US, the festivities currently include a parade, fashion show, music, religious services, and picnicking. Carnivals, rides, baseball games, and political rallies, which used to take place, have not been held for some years.

- grave "Decoration Day" and picnics associated with Mount Olive and Nicodemus Cemeteries and the Nicodemus townsite:
  This practice has evolved from a formal event to an informal tradition practiced by a few descendants who return from various parts of the US to place flowers on the graves of loved ones.

- baptisms in Spring Creek, South Fork Solomon River, and the inundated sand pit east of Bogue:
  This practice ceased during the 1960s. The inundated sand pit east of Bogue was also used for baptism for many years. After a new church was built in the 1970s, baptisms began to be held inside.

- Pioneer Days:
  No longer being held, this event was sponsored by the Nicodemus Historical Society between 1992 and 1996.

- farming practices and operations including crop selection and irrigation methods:
  Farming means and methods are currently characterized by the use of mechanical farming equipment, chemicals, mechanical/hydraulic irrigation systems, and modern plant species and cultivars. Practices that survive from early settlement include dry-land farming, and the prominence of corn and wheat as the primary cash crops. Terracing and contour plowing, intended to conserve water, are other practices that can be traced to the 1950s.

- gathering of wild greens, fruits, and berries, medicinal plants:
  It appears that local residents continue the practice of gathering food and medicinals from the wild, which began during the early settlement period.

- relocation of buildings to suit new needs:
  Nicodemus has a strong tradition of moving buildings to new locations to accommodate changing needs. The Fairview School, for example, was moved to the townsite to support the District No. 1 Schoolhouse. As school enrollment began to dwindle in subsequent years, the old Fairview Schoolhouse was purchased by the American Legion in 1952 and moved to the corner of Washington Avenue and Second Street, where it was used for meetings and events. After the railroad bypassed Nicodemus in 1888, many of the buildings located within the townsite were moved to Bogue.

Analysis of the Townsite/Section 1 Landscape

(See figure 133, townsite features surviving from the early settlement period, with high interpretive potential; and figures 134a & b, and 135a, b, c, d, e, & f, comparative images of the townsite over time)

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The townsite/Section 1 landscape retains the environmental setting characteristics that were present during the early settlement period, including the upland plateau edged by the more steeply sloped corridors of Spring Creek and the South Fork Solomon River.

- Spring Creek corridor:
  The corridor survives from the early settlement period.

- South Fork Solomon River corridor:
  This corridor survives from the early settlement period.

RESPONSES TO NATURAL FEATURES AND SYSTEMS

There are few surviving examples of early settlement period responses to natural features and systems. These include the use of local limestone as a construction material and the siting of the town atop a plateau near the South Fork Solomon River corridor.

- wells:
  Drilled wells were not characteristic of the early settlement period. Hand dug wells were, however, prevalent within the townsite and the section. There was a public well located at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Third Street during the early settlement period that is no longer extant. If identified, hand-dug wells may survive from the early settlement period and would be character-defining.

- use of limestone as building material:
  The A.M.E. Church and Fletcher-Switzer residence are the only surviving limestone structures that date from the early settlement period. Other features that are character-defining, although they post-date early settlement, are the First Baptist Church, Township Hall, and Jerry Scruggs residence. The limestone blocks that were used to construct the A.M.E. and First Baptist Churches, and Fletcher-Switzer residence were covered with stucco in the 1940s and 1950s.

- siting of town atop a knoll in close proximity to the South Fork Solomon River:
  The location of the townsite illustrates the initial connection made by the town settlers between its position atop a relatively level knoll or upland plateau and close proximity to water resources.

- curb and gutter drainage improvements associated with paved town roads:
  These road improvements post-date the early settlement period.

- drainage ditches along roads without curb and gutter:
  The practice of pulling ditches appears to have originated during the early settlement period. During the early twentieth century, local landowners were required to assist with the upkeep of the roads at periodic intervals.

- use of shale as road surfacing material to limit dust and mud on hard-packed earth roads:
  Research did not yield information regarding the date of origin of this surface treatment.

PATTERNS OF SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Many of the patterns of spatial organization established during the early settlement period are still in evidence today. These include the siting of the town on a relatively level knoll above the South Fork Solomon River; the platting of the townsite in a grid with roads established orthogonally along cardinal orientations; the use of townsite land for crop fields and pasture, the maintenance of open vegetative character over much of the townsite; and the planting of ornamental and shade trees in association with public buildings and sites. (Many of the patterns of spatial organization assessed below have been grouped together for clarity.)

- open crop fields on upland plateaus and ridge systems;

- townsite formed of orthogonally-gridded streets edged intermittently by buildings;

- narrow to wide riparian corridors edging knoll;

- township/range/section system evident in orthogonal road alignments, field patterns, fencelines, and hedgerows;

- farm clusters within open agricultural lands;

- low-lying areas associated with the South Fork Solomon River and edged by open slopes and wooded areas;

- interior areas of town blocks edged by buildings, hedgerows, windbreaks, and clusters of trees:
  These characteristics survive from the early settlement period.

- interior areas of town blocks edged by buildings, hedgerows, windbreaks, and clusters of trees:
  Though research findings did not include documentation of the individual character of townsite blocks during settlement, historic ground photographs suggest that hedgerows, trees, and windbreak plantings were not present. Early newspaper accounts suggest that town residents conducted beautification projects that entailed tree planting. The spatial organization of streetscapes edged by buildings continues to the present.

BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS

Although little is known about the character of the townsite and boundary demarcations that were present during the early settlement period, many of the existing boundary demarcation types likely survive from the late nineteenth century. For example, the South Fork Solomon River continues to form the southern edge of the Township below the townsite, and the road system that currently exists was established with the platting of the town in 1877–1878. Because the townsite landscape is comprised of numerous individually-owned properties, and ownership of each parcel has changed at least a few times since early settlement, boundaries between properties and land uses are likely to have changed at the level of the individual property.

- South Fork Solomon River:
  This feature survives from the early settlement period.

- roads:
  The alignments of existing road corridors generally survive from the early settlement period.

- fencelines:
  It is not known to what extent current hedgerows survive from the early settlement period, although it is likely that most post-date it.

- hedgerows:
  It is not known to what extent current fencelines survive from the early settlement period, although it is likely that most post-date it.

- field patterns:
  Although specific field patterns have likely changed since early settlement, this characteristic generally survives from the early settlement period.

- plowed fire breaks:
  It is not known to what extent plowed fire breaks were used during the early settlement period.

LAND USES

Character-defining land uses within the townsite include: residential, recreational, agricultural (cropland and pasture), undeveloped open space, and institutional. The townsite no longer includes examples of commercial land uses, although this was an important component of the community during the early settlement period. The loss of the original town well is an important change in utility land uses since the early settlement period. Agriculture is a far more prominent land use within the townsite today than it was during early settlement. (The land uses assessed below have been grouped together for clarity.)

- recreational—ballfield across from the Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse, Homecoming activities throughout much of Nicodemus;

- residential;

- agricultural—cropland;

- agricultural—pastureland and livestock corrals;

- undeveloped open space;

- institutional: These land uses survive from the settlement period.

VEGETATION

Very little is known about vegetation within the Section 1 landscape during the early settlement period. It appears that there were few trees within the townsite, and most residents were unable to afford to plant trees during the early settlement period. The establishment of crop fields, vegetable gardens, pasture, and the presence of prairie or field grasses within the townsite and the Section are character-defining vegetation resources that likely date from the early settlement period. There are no specific trees or shrubs known to survive from the early settlement period. (Many of the vegetation features assessed below have been grouped together for clarity.)

- crop fields;
- vegetable/kitchen gardens;
- pasture;
- prairie grasslands/meadows:
  These landcover types were likely present during the early settlement period. There appear to be more agricultural crops grown within the townsite today than in the 1950s.
- shade trees;
- evergreen trees;
- evergreen shrubs (e.g. junipers);
- flowering shrubs (e.g. lilacs, roses);
- grassy lawn;
- evergreen windbreak plantings;
- lines, rows, and double rows of trees along property boundaries;
- hedgerows:
  These features post-date the early settlement period.

CIRCULATION

All of the public roads within the townsite are character-defining with the exception of US Highway 24. It has not been possible to determine whether there are any private lanes or driveways that survive from the early settlement period.

Although the townsite was platted as early as 1877–1878, many of the roads indicated on the plat were not constructed by the end of the early settlement period, and many remain unbuilt to this day. The primary roads and streets known to have been in use during the early settlement period included South, Washington, and Adams Avenues; the primary road leading west to Hill City (currently known as US Highway 24 and South Avenue); and portions of First, Second, Third, and Seventh Streets. It is likely that Madison and Jackson Avenues, and Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Streets also existed, although it has not been possible to confirm this through documentary resources. These early roads were surfaced with hard-packed earth, and were graded using horse-drawn equipment. Examples of asphalt paving and concrete curb and gutter post-date the early settlement period. (Many of the circulation features assessed below have been grouped together for clarity.)

- Washington Avenue;
- Adams Avenue;
- Seventh Street:
  These roads survive from the early settlement period, although the existing paving and curbing materials date from the latter part of the twentieth century.
- South Avenue/Frontage Road;
- Madison Avenue;
- Monroe Avenue;
- Jackson Avenue;
- First Street;
- Second Street;
- Third Street;
- Fourth Street;
- Fifth Street;
- Sixth Street:
  Portions of these roads appear to survive from the early settlement period, although the paving and curbing materials date from the latter part of the twentieth century.

- US Highway 24:
  Portions of this road survive from the early settlement period. The alignment and surface material post-dates the early settlement period.

- crushed stone and hard-packed earth access drives to various residences;

- crushed stone, hard-packed earth, and asphalt parking areas, particularly associated with institutional and municipal complexes;

- concrete sidewalks:
  These circulation systems likely post-date the early settlement period.

- paths leading northeast and northwest from Clementine Vaughn House;

- path between St. Francis Hotel and Fred and Iva Lee Switzer House:
  The dates of origin of these paths have not been determined.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

During the early settlement period, many of the residential structures built within the townsite were dugouts and sod-ups constructed of sod, wood, and limestone. There are no surviving examples of sod buildings within the townsite. During the 1880s, buildings constructed of wood and locally-cut limestone began to replace sod structures. Buildings were constructed for residential, agricultural, commercial, and institutional uses. Most were modest in size. Townsite buildings that survive from the early settlement period include the A.M.E. Church and the Fletcher-Switzer residence. Many other buildings within the townsite are also character-defining. These include the stone buildings that survive: the A.M.E. Church, Fletcher-Switzer residence, First Baptist Church, Township Hall, and the Jerry Scruggs Residence. The remainder are wooden structures. Other character-defining features are buildings that have been relocated from their original sites. One example of this tradition is the Priscilla Art Club building that is located next door to the Township Hall. The Priscilla Art Club building was formerly a Township school. Current buildings that are not character-defining, primarily due to their materials such as brick and plastic, are the mobile homes, municipal garage, water tower, and fire station, the Villa, picnic shelters within the Roadside Park, and the new First Baptist Church and Parsonage.

- Structures surviving from the early settlement period:
  —Fletcher-Switzer Residence/St. Francis Hotel (*see next section for more detail*)
  —A.M.E. Church (*see next section for more detail*)

- Buildings and structures post-dating the early settlement period (ownership identified through 1983 HABS study, has likely changed in many cases):
  —Ernestine Van Duvall Duplex House
  —mobile home across street (ownership unknown)
  —Virgil and Juanita Robinson House
  —Bernard and Ava Bates House
  —G. Irvin and Minerva Sayers House and garage
  —"The Villa" (HUD housing complex), comprised of six buildings
  —mobile home to north (ownership unknown)
  —Township Hall (*see next section for more detail*)
  —Priscilla Art Club building (*see next section for more detail*)
  —two picnic shelters
  —Old First Baptist Church (*see next section for more detail*)
  —New First Baptist Church and parsonage
  —municipal garage
  —municipal fire station
  —municipal water tower
  —Temor Terry House
  —William Henry Napue House and garage
  —Clarence and Yvonne Sayers House, garage, and outbuilding
  —Virgil and Roberta Robinson, Sr. House and shed
  —mobile home, possible owners Robert and Billie Brogden
  —Alvin and Ada Bates House and garage
  —Veryl and Fern Switzer Trailer
  —four grain bins
  —Butler building
  —Ordral and Alvena Alexander House and metal outbuilding
  —Lloyd Wellington House and garage
  —nearby mobile home (ownership unknown)
  —Harold and Bernita Switzer Trailer (vacant)
  —Hattie Craig Burney House and shed
  —Jerry Scruggs, Jr. House (vacant)
  —nearby mobile home (ownership unknown)
  —Orlando and Armatha Napue House (vacant)

—Sahara Moore House, two mobile homes, and shed
—Fred & Iva Lee Switzer House, well house, car park, and shed
—Robert and Bertha Carter House, barn in ruins
—Donald and Pearlena Moore House, machine shop, shed, grain bin, and shed
—St. Francis Hotel sheds
—two nearby mobile homes (ownership unknown)
—Clementine Vaughn House (abandoned)
—Ace Williams House (abandoned)
—District No. 1 Schoolhouse and shed (*see next section for more detail*)
—Guy and Juanita Redd House, garage, three outbuildings, and grain bin
—Calvin Sayers House (abandoned), nearby shed, pole shed
—nearby mobile home (ownership unknown)
—Nicodemus Historical Society building (formerly residence of Ola Wilson)
—Rosa Stokes House, garage, and shed

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

All of the small-scale features observed in the field for this project appear to post-date the early settlement period, although little is known about the character and configuration of small-scale features during the nineteenth century. These include

- directional, informational, regulatory signage
- baseball backstop (metal and wire)
- playground equipment
- stone debris pile (from former Sayers general store)
- stone debris pile (from former Masonic Lodge)
- chain link fencing
- wooden fencing
- livestock pens
- dog houses
- historical markers
- overhead street lights
- mail boxes
- parking meter
- water pumps
- benches
- picnic tables
- trash receptacles
- flagpoles
- utility poles with electrical and telephone lines
- butane and propane tanks
- wells
- fire hydrants

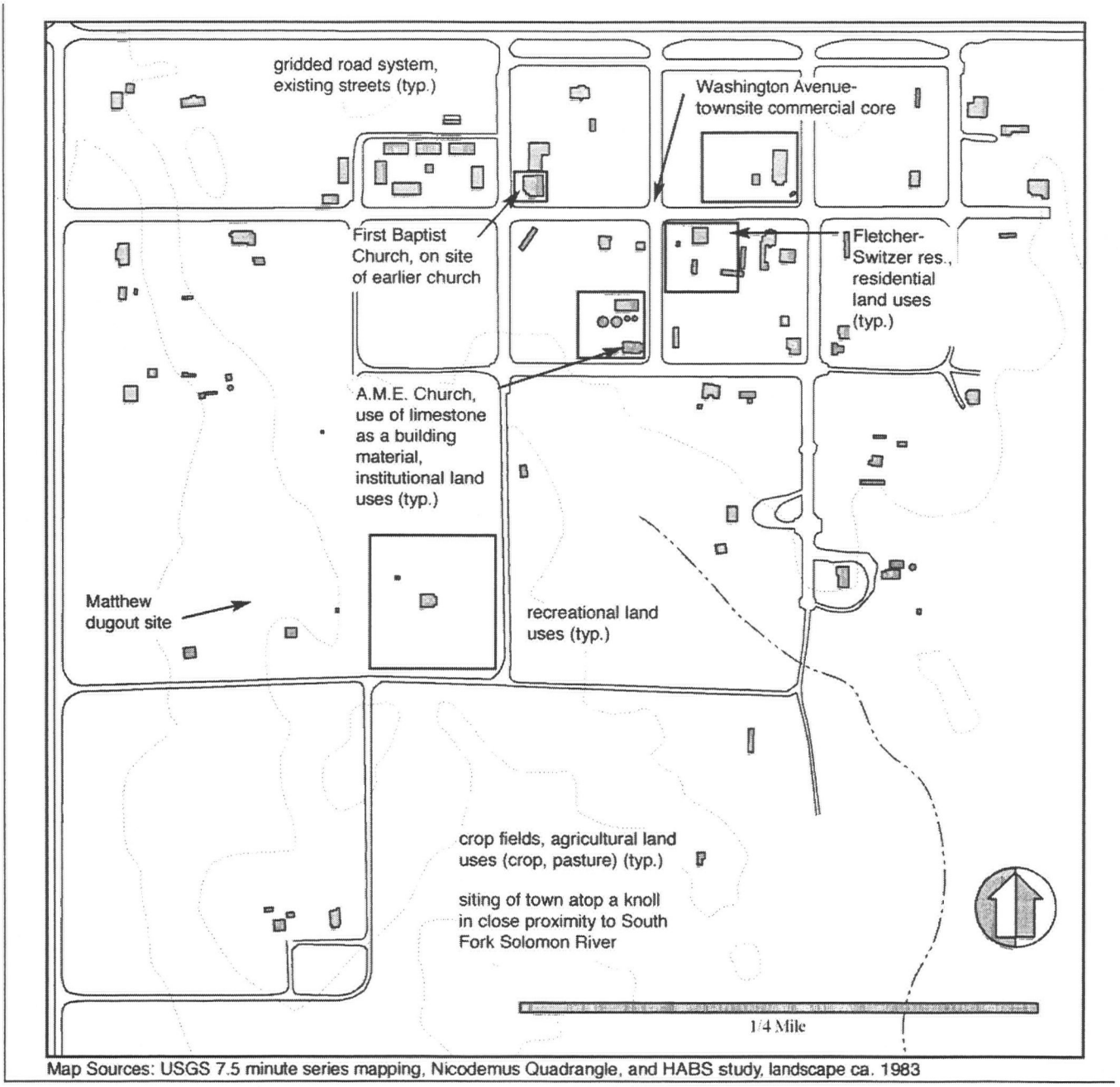


Figure 133.
Townsite features surviving from the early settlement period, with high interpretive potential.

COMPARATIVE IMAGES: TOWNSITE OBLIQUE AERIAL VIEWS

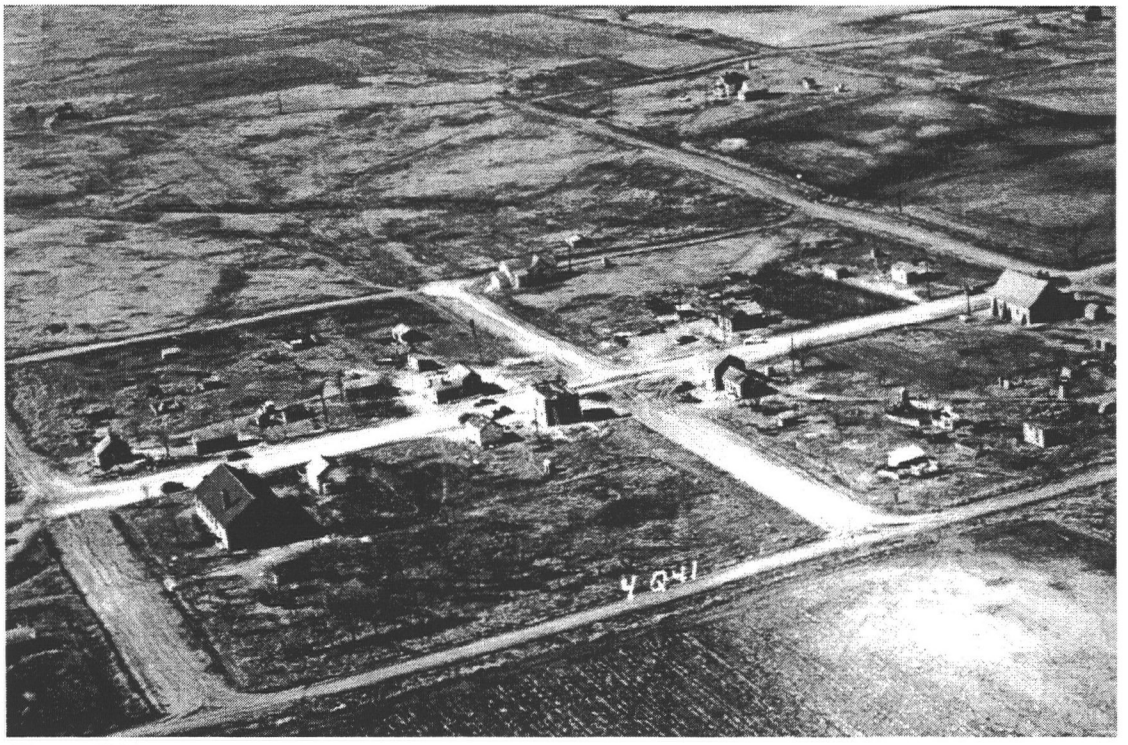


Figure 134a.
Nicodemus townsite, 1953. Note Township Hall on left, First Baptist Church on right. (Source: Bernice Bates.)



Figure 134b.
Nicodemus townsite, 1999. Note the increase in tree cover. (Source: Forgy Surveying.)

COMPARATIVE IMAGES: WASHINGTON AVENUE, LOOKING WEST

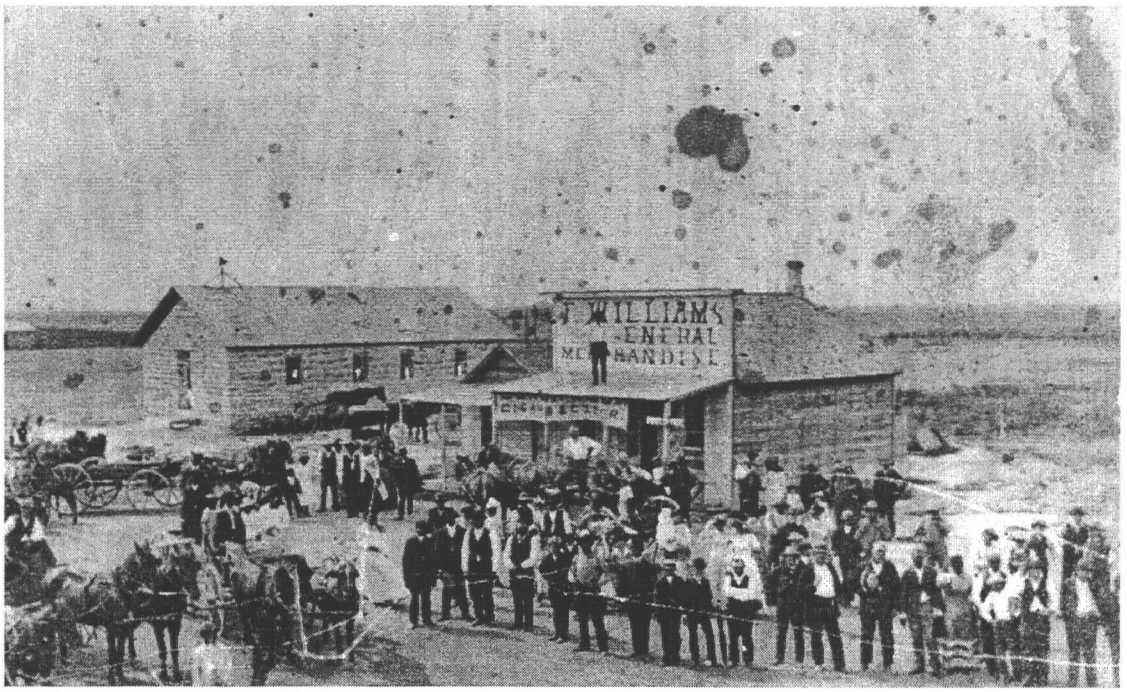


Figure 135a.
Circa 1885 view looking west along Washington Avenue of the Williams general store and original First Baptist Church. The 1907 First Baptist Church was built atop the site of the earlier church.

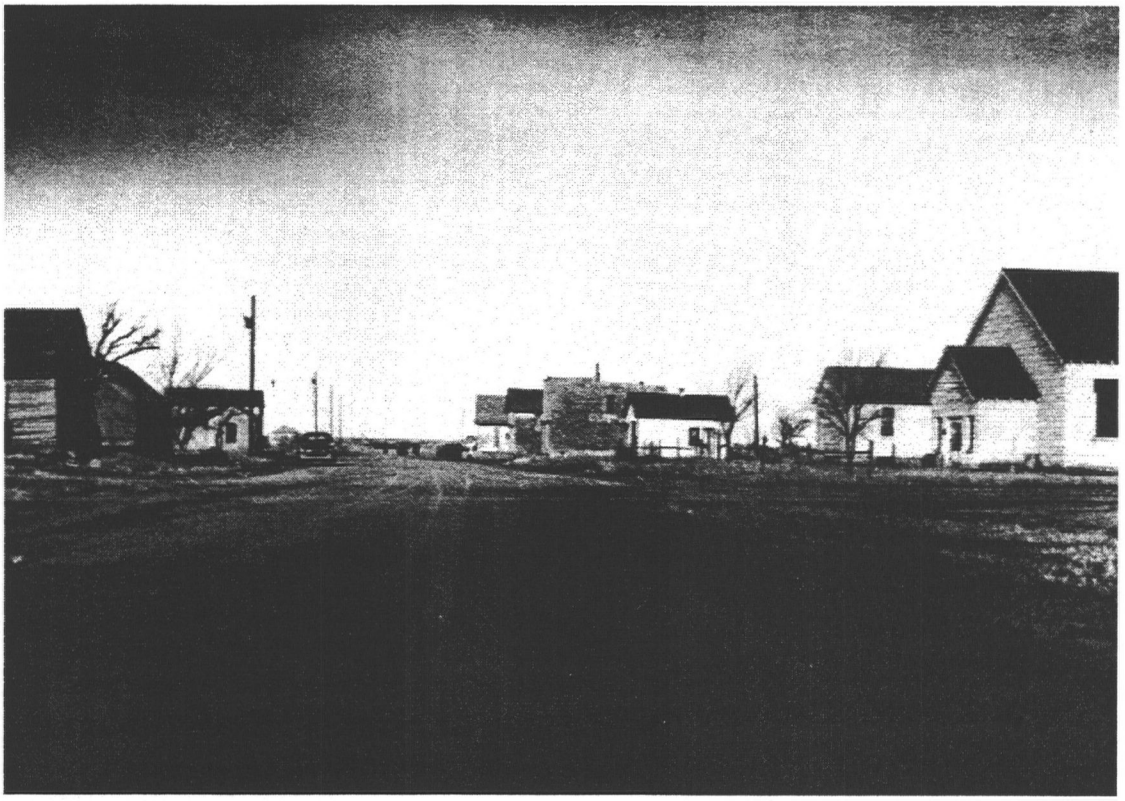


Figure 135b.
1940 view looking west along Washington Avenue. The First Baptist Church, Sayers general store, and Masonic Hall, former Green general store, are on the right in distance.

COMPARATIVE IMAGES: WASHINGTON AVENUE, LOOKING WEST

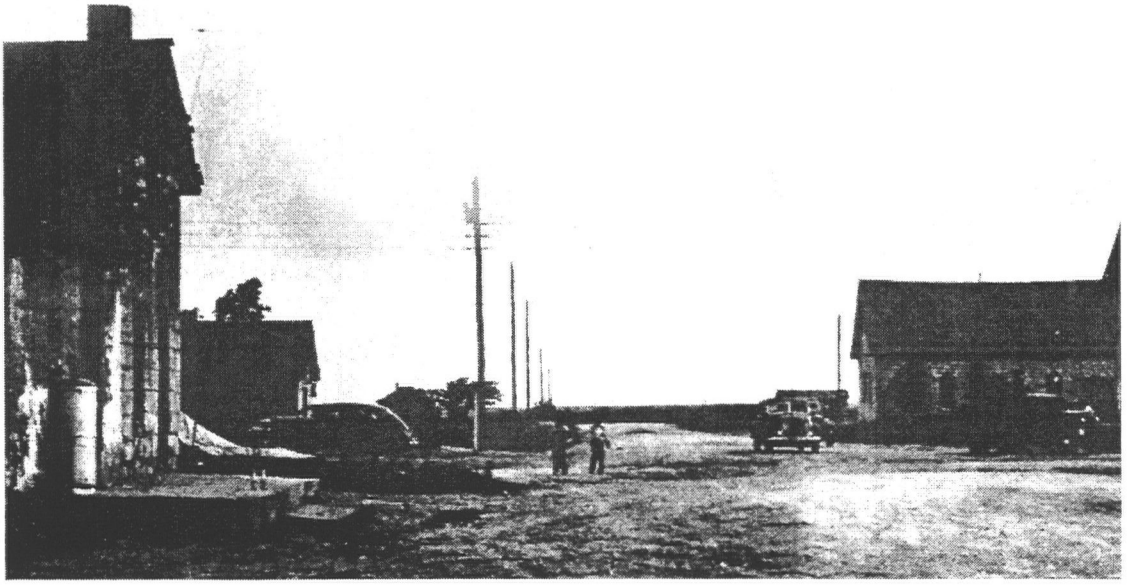


Figure 135c.
A 1950 view looking west along Washington Avenue. Note the First Baptist Church and Sayers general store on the right. (Source: *Ebony*, October 1950.)

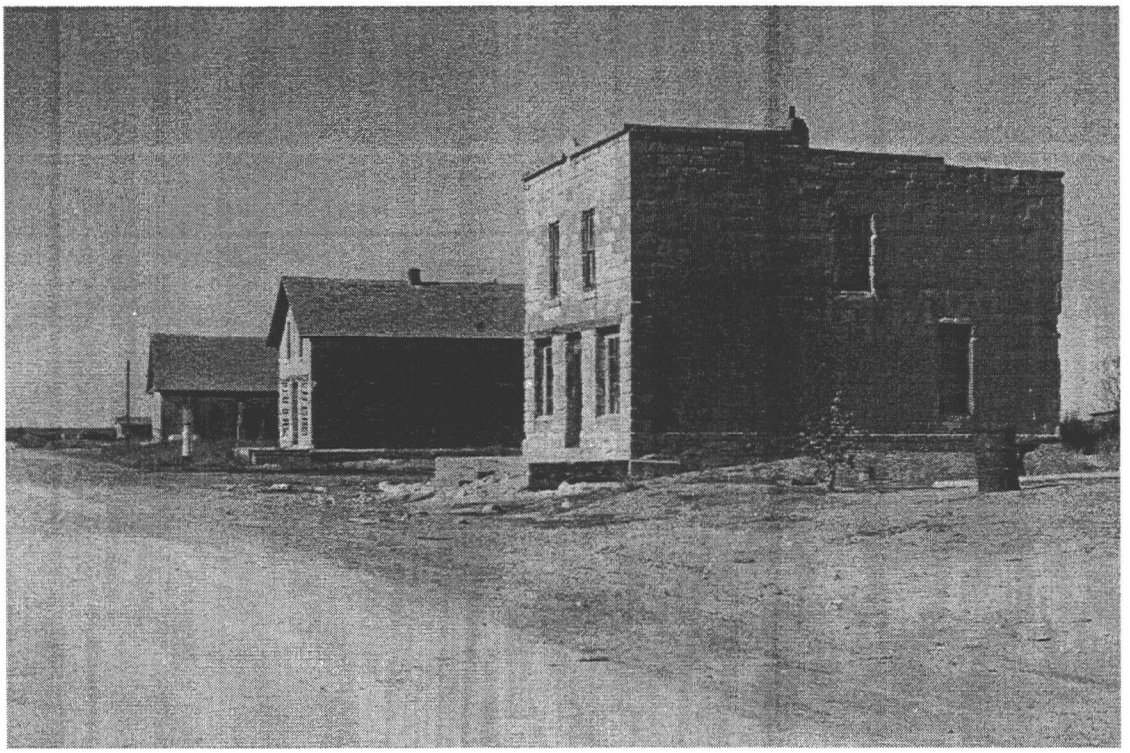


Figure 135d.
A slightly later view looking west along Washington Avenue. (Source: KSHS, Topeka, KS.)

COMPARATIVE IMAGES: WASHINGTON AVENUE, LOOKING WEST



Figure 135e.
Circa 1960s view looking west along Washington Avenue. Note Fletcher-Switzer residence on left, First Baptist Church, general store, Masonic Hall in distance on right. Note increase in tree cover. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

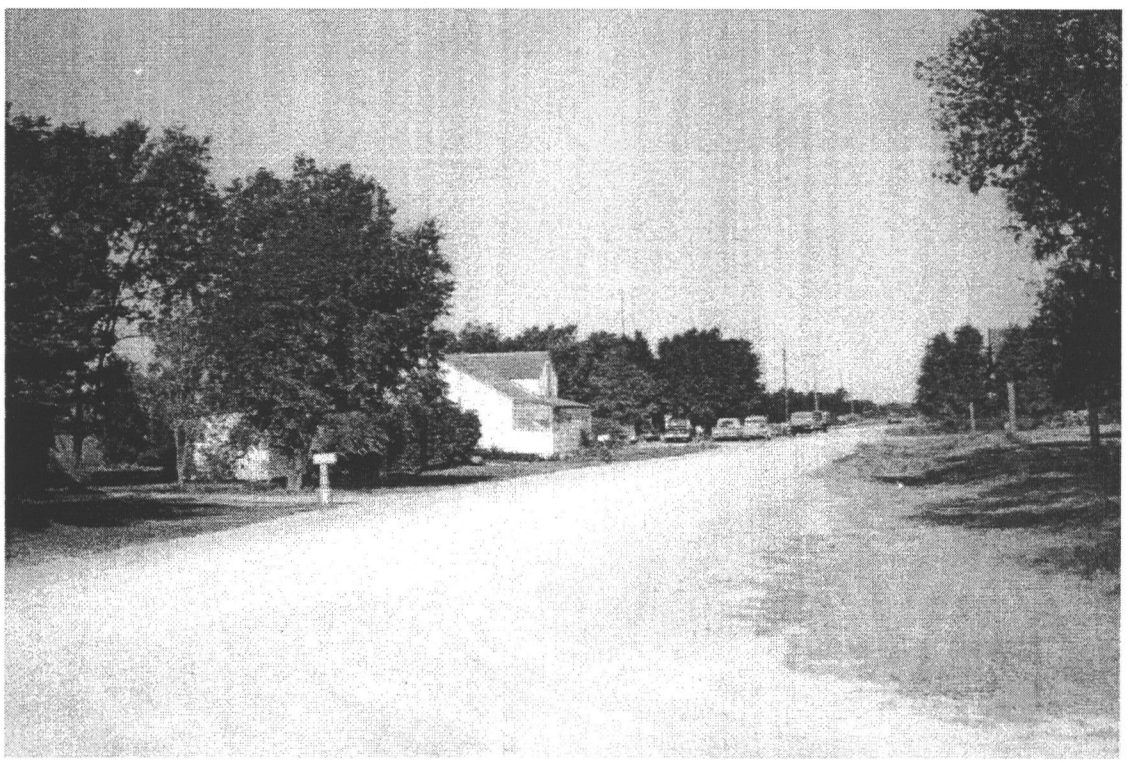


Figure 135f.
1980s view. Note Fletcher-Switzer residence and First Baptist Church, loss of Masonic Hall and Sayers general store. (Source: KSHS.)

Analysis of the National Historic Site Landscape

INTRODUCTION

This section discusses in more detail the evolution of seven individual properties located within the Nicodemus townsite: 1) A.M.E. Church; 2) Township Hall; 3) District No. 1 Schoolhouse; 4) First Baptist Church; 5) Fletcher-Switzer residence; 6) Roadside Park; 7) Township Park. The first five of these sites comprise the Nicodemus NHS.

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL (A.M.E.) CHURCH

(See figures 136a, b, c and d)

During the early settlement period, the Nicodemus A.M.E. Church congregation first met in a wood frame building in the southwestern part of the townsite, north of the existing schoolhouse. At that time, the current church site was occupied by the stone dwelling of S.G. Wilson. In 1897, the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church congregation acquired Wilson's home and renovated it as a church. In 1910, the A.M.E. congregation purchased the structure and abandoned their frame church building in favor of the former Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. This building is now known as the A.M.E. Church.

A 1943 photograph of the church indicates that it was a cut limestone block structure. Before the church closed for regular services in 1947, however, the church was stuccoed, and a cross-gabled roof addition had been constructed along its northern facade. Period photographs from the 1940s indicate that the landscape surrounding the building was generally open, with little or no woody vegetation, circulation features, or other landscape elements associated with the site.

During the 1950s, the building was acquired and used for storage by Mrs. Ada Bates. By the 1960s, trees and shrubs framed the entrance to the building. This vegetation is no longer extant. Electricity began to come into use within the townsite during the 1950s; however, it is not known when electricity was installed at the A.M.E. Church parcel. Little is also known about the date of origin of the grain bins and Butler building that currently occupy the northern portion of the church parcel.

Townsite streets were paved during the mid- to late 1970s. The existing historical markers that are found in front of the A.M.E. Church and other townsite buildings appear to have been added after the 1983 HABS study of the townsite, although the specific date of their establishment is not currently known. The building began to receive attention from the Federal Government after the establishment of the Nicodemus NHS. In late 1996, the NPS Southwest Preservation Crew performed emergency stabilization on the church building. They shored up the walls, covered the windows, and put on a temporary metal roof.

With the exception of the church building and the alignment of the adjacent street system, all of the landscape features associated with this property post-date the townsite early establishment period. The remnant grassy field vegetation may be characteristic of the early settlement period landscape, although no documentation has been located describing the character of site vegetation during that period. The A.M.E. Church property and all of its features are character-defining.



Figure 136a.
The A.M.E. Church in 1943 prior to the application of stucco. Note the lack of vegetation and other features around the building. (Source: Belleau.)

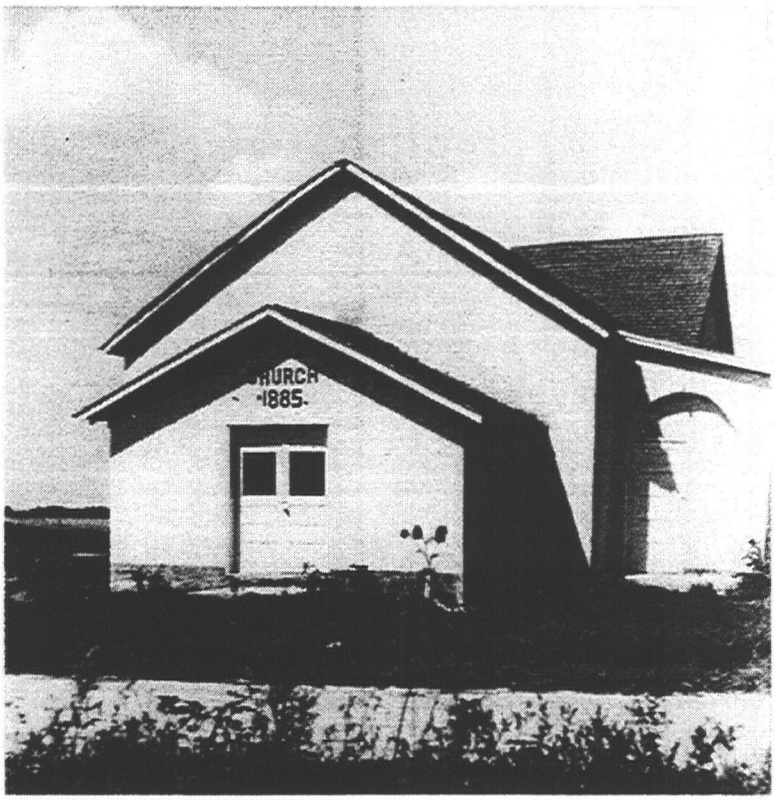


Figure 136b.
The A.M.E. Church in 1949 after stucco applied. Note cross-gable roof addition, right. (Source: Shaw, KSU.)

COMPARATIVE IMAGES: A.M.E. CHURCH



Figure 136c.
A.M.E. Church, ca. 1960s. Note the growth of vegetation. (Source: KSHS.)



Figure 136d.
A.M.E. Church, ca. 1990s. Note lack of cross-gable roof, deterioration. (Source: NHL files.)

TOWNSHIP HALL

The Township Hall, completed in 1939, post-dates the early settlement period. However, it is a highly important institution to the community, providing the location where elected local government officials convene, and where community members meet for events and social occasions located on the corner of Washington Avenue and Second Street. The building, constructed of local magnesia limestone, was a WPA-funded project.

During the early settlement period, the site where the Township Hall is located was occupied by a cluster of small unidentified buildings, likely residences, and a well. By the 1930s, it appears that most of these structures were no longer extant. In 1937, work began on the Township Hall. The contract for the building was supervised by local resident Earl Alexander. Garold Napue quarried the magnesia limestone used to construct the building from a quarry near Webster in Rooks County. The building was dedicated in 1939 and quickly became the center of the community's social and cultural activities. Early photographs of the building indicate that wood post and rail and wire fencing edged the property along Washington Avenue and deciduous shade trees flanked the entrance.

During the early 1940s, 'Aunt' Blanche White founded a 4H Club in Nicodemus to encourage older children of the Township to learn about agricultural activities. One of the many activities and projects she supervised was the general beautification of town. In the mid-1940s, she and her students planted several Siberian elm trees adjacent to Township Hall. A 1949 image indicates that there was a flagpole sited in front of the building at that time. A 1953 bird's eye aerial photograph of the townsite indicates that behind the Township Hall was a building that likely housed the bathroom facilities. This building was removed in 1995.

In 1945, the District No. 33 Schoolhouse, an eighteen by twenty-five foot frame building that had served students living in the Township, was purchased by the Priscilla Art Club and moved to the current site west of and adjacent to the Township Hall lot. Founded in 1925, the Priscilla Art Club sponsored aid drives and promoted sewing and quilting. Nothing is currently known about the building that housed the organization prior to 1945, although it is said to have been located within the block between Second and Third Streets along Washington Avenue.

In 1953, the Emancipation Celebration or Homecoming was held in town for the first time and carnival rides were erected on the vacant lot just north of the Township Hall. At around the same time, electricity became available in Nicodemus. Alvin Bates wired most of the houses in the area including the First Baptist Church, the post office, and possibly the Township Hall.

The building was renovated during the 1970s, including the replacement of the original doors. Between 1981 and 1982, funds were received from a Community Development Block Grant that enabled the Township Board to construct the tennis and basketball courts. The project was administered by Gil Alexander. The NPS began renting the Township Hall on June 1, 1998. The building serves as a visitor contact station for the Nicodemus NHS during the summer and fall. The date of origin of the parcel's other existing site furnishings, utilities, and circulation features is not currently known.

All of the landscape features associated with the Township Hall site, except the alignment of the adjacent public road corridors, post-date the early settlement period. The Township Hall property and all of its features are character-defining.

ROADSIDE PARK

During the early settlement period, the landscape associated with the Roadside Park appears to have been occupied by two or three small buildings and structures that were likely associated with residential uses. By 1930, only one dwelling—the Baxter residence—remained on this 1.1-acre parcel. Many of the larger trees and shrubs currently in evidence within the park appear to have been planted as part of a 4H project during the 1940s.

In conjunction with the relocation of US Highway 24 and its right-of-way in the mid-1960s, the Nicodemus Township Board donated the Roadside Park parcel to the State of Kansas to establish public open space. The parcel was to be used as a roadside 'rest area.' The state placed a shelter, picnic benches, and a stone privy in the park. The site was administered by the Kansas Department of Transportation after the 1960s, but maintained by Nicodemus Township. The Kansas Department of Transportation returned the property to Nicodemus Township in 1984.

Three historical markers are located within the park. In 1970, the Kansas State Historical Society and the State Highway Commission erected a historic marker on the

corner of Third and South Streets commemorating the town of Nicodemus. In 1976, a bronze plaque was erected indicating the town's NHL designation. During the late 1990s, an NPS identity sign was added to the park site. The dates of origin of the existing site utilities and many of the site furnishings are not currently known.

All of the landscape features associated with this parcel, with the exception of the alignment of the adjacent public roadways and perhaps the alley between the Roadside Park and the Township Hall parcel, post-date the early settlement period.

TOWNSHIP PARK

During the early settlement period, the Township Park parcel was occupied by William Green's two-story cut limestone general store at the northeast corner of Washington Avenue and Third Street, caddy-corner from the town well. The establishment of Green's store, and two other businesses nearby, formed Nicodemus's commercial center at this intersection. Over time, the intersection became known as the 'public square,' and Washington Avenue was commonly referred to as 'Main Street.'

William Green left Nicodemus soon after he constructed his store. The building subsequently began to serve a variety of uses. It is thought that Green's store later became known as Benevolent Hall, or the 'Hall,' the meeting place for the First Grand Independent Benevolent Society during the mid-1880s.[29] Several newspaper references describe Benevolent Hall as adjacent to the public square and the intersection of Third Street and Washington Avenue.

After the 1888 departure of many townspeople for Bogue, the St. Francis Hotel, S. G. Wilson's store, and the William Green building were among the buildings that remained in Nicodemus. Over the next decade, African-American social institutions proliferated within Nicodemus and the region, some of which occupied the space of former businesses. In 1893, the William Green building was converted into the Masonic 'Temple' or Hall. The Masons occupied the second floor, while the first floor served a variety of commercial and residential needs over the years. During the early twentieth century, an addition was constructed along the rear of the building. The Masonic Hall served as one of the primary social centers of the community for many years until construction of the Township Hall in 1939.

Sometime during the second quarter of the twentieth century, two new baseball fields were established in town. Members of an all-women's baseball club played on an informal or "makeshift ball diamond....just to the right of the old Masonic Hall" in the early 1930s.

The Masonic Hall was permanently damaged during a wind storm in the 1930s. As Bernice A. Bates recalled, "after the wind storm hit this building....it took the roof off of it and almost ruined the building. And it happened about two months after they dropped the insurance. They never had enough money to replace it, so it stood there for a while and finally it was torn down."[30] In 1972, the Masonic Hall was razed by Donald Moore. The upper two stories were knocked down with a bulldozer and buried in the basement of the structure. During the same year, a marker commemorating the site was built by Len Schamber and Vernon Van Duvall and placed on the former site of the building. The memorial, which exists today, consists of three limestone blocks, two containing Masonic symbols, and one a cornerstone with the date '1880,' encased within a brick façade.[31]

Between 1981 and 1982, funds were received from a Community Development Block Grant that enabled the Township Board to construct Township Park on the vacant lot, donated by Bernie Sayers, that once housed the Masonic Hall. The facilities developed on the parcel included children's playground equipment and site furnishings. Gil Alexander administered the project and Len Schamber put up the playground equipment but had trouble stabilizing it because the upper stories of the Masonic Hall had been pushed into the basement and the

[29] *Western Cyclone*, June 17, 1886, 2; *Western Cyclone*, August 5, 1886, 3. It is believed that 'Benevolent Hall' was eventually occupied by the Nicodemus chapter of the Masons and subsequently became known as the 'Masonic Lodge,' 'Masonic Temple,' or 'Masonic Hall.' Referred to as the Masonic Hall, the building housed the Masons and Eastern Star organizations upstairs and served as a social and community center until Township Hall was completed in 1939.

[30] Fraser, 'Architectural Development,' 46; Fly, 'Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas.' Interview with Ora W. Switzer, 1983, 4; Fly, 'Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas.' Interview with Bernice A. Bates, 1983, 10.

[31] Fly, 'Into the Twentieth Century,' 78; Fly, 'Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas.' Interview with Bernice A. Bates, 1983, 10; Interview with Donald Moore, 4/18/2001, 141, Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

ground was not well-packed.[32] The dates of origin of parcel utilities and many of the plantings are not currently known.

All extant landscape features associated with the Township Park parcel post-date the early settlement period, with the exception of the road alignments of the abutting streets—Washington Avenue and Third Street—and possibly the alley located between the Township and Roadside Parks.

DISTRICT NO. 1 SCHOOLHOUSE

(See figures 137a, b, c, and d)

In September 1887, the residents of Nicodemus began construction of the townsite's first formal schoolhouse, a two-story, thirty-six by forty foot, four-room frame structure located west of Fourth Street near the center of town. By December 1887, the Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse was outfitted with a bell. The following April, students planted 'a number of trees' around the school grounds.[33] The schoolhouse served the community until 1916, when it burned to the ground.

In 1918, a new school building was constructed on the same site in Nicodemus for School District No. 1. This building survives today. The year the new schoolhouse was constructed it held nineteen students and was described as "modern," with a cistern at the corner of the porch for water. A bell, taken from one of the local Methodist churches, was used for the schoolhouse, and there was a small barn behind the school for the students' horses.

After World War II, due to substantial postwar out-migration, the rural population of Nicodemus Township could not support many of the school districts surrounding the town of Nicodemus. As a result, in 1945 all of the rural schools in Nicodemus Township were closed including the Fairview Schoolhouse in District No. 78, and the District No. 33 Schoolhouse. Only the Nicodemus Schoolhouse remained open. During the same year, the Fairview schoolhouse was moved to the District No. 1 site to accommodate the increased enrollment. School enrollment again began to dwindle in the late 1940s, and the old Fairview schoolhouse, no longer needed, was purchased by the American Legion Post in 1952. The building was subsequently moved to the corner of Washington Avenue and Second Street, diagonally across from Township Hall.

In 1960, the Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse was closed due to lack of students. After 1960, Nicodemus Township students traveled to Hill City and Bogue for classes. The District No. 1 Schoolhouse was subsequently used by the 4H Club until 1983 when it was purchased by the Nicodemus American Legion Post.[34]

In 1980, the G.M. Sayers general store and gas station was torn down due to deterioration. Part of the stone remains was hauled off by local residents and piled near the schoolhouse. Nothing is currently known about the dates of origin for the wood/coal shed, privy ruins, well, drainage ditches, playground equipment, or utilities remaining on the parcel.

All existing landscape features post-date the early settlement period. The District No. 1 Schoolhouse property and all of its features are character-defining.

[32] Fly, 'Into the Twentieth Century,' 79; Fly, 'Preserving the Heritage of Nicodemus, Kansas.' Interview with Ordral and Alvena Alexander, 1983, 18-19; Telephone conversation with Ruth Dobson, 1/11/2001.

[33] Hamilton, 'Settlement of Nicodemus,' 14, 24; *Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 7, 1887, 3; *Western Cyclone*, December 16, 1887, 3; *Nicodemus Cyclone*, April 6, 1888, 4.

[34] Jennifer Michael, "Everyday Life in Nicodemus," Interview with Leland Clark, 1996, (Report on fieldwork conducted by Jennifer Michael, Ph.D. for the National Council for the Traditional Arts and the National Park Service, 1999) 278.

COMPARATIVE IMAGES: DISTRICT NO. 1 SCHOOLHOUSE

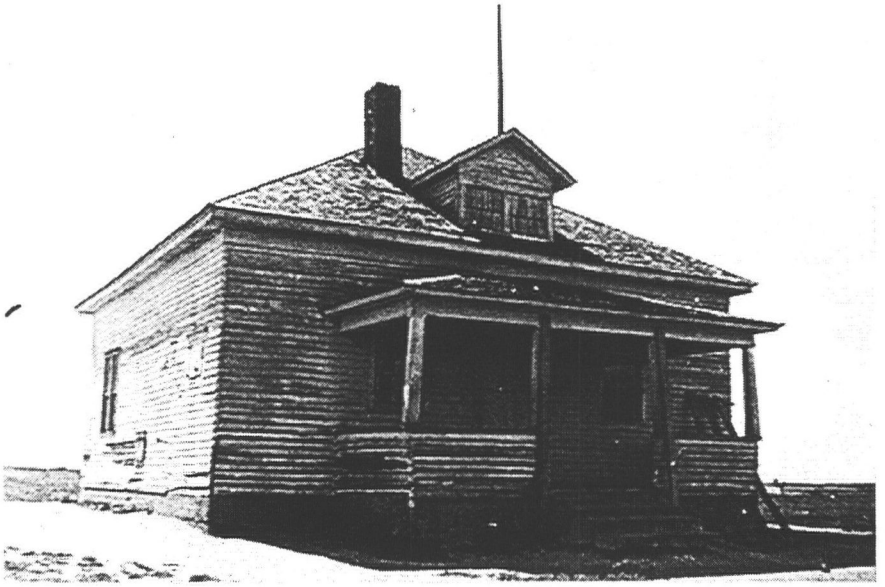


Figure 137a.
District No. 1 Schoolhouse, 1943. Note the poor condition of the building. (Source: Belleau.)



Figure 137b.
District No. 1 Schoolhouse, 1940s. Note Fairview Schoolhouse, bell, and wood shed to right. (Source: KSHS.)

COMPARATIVE IMAGES: DISTRICT NO. 1 SCHOOLHOUSE

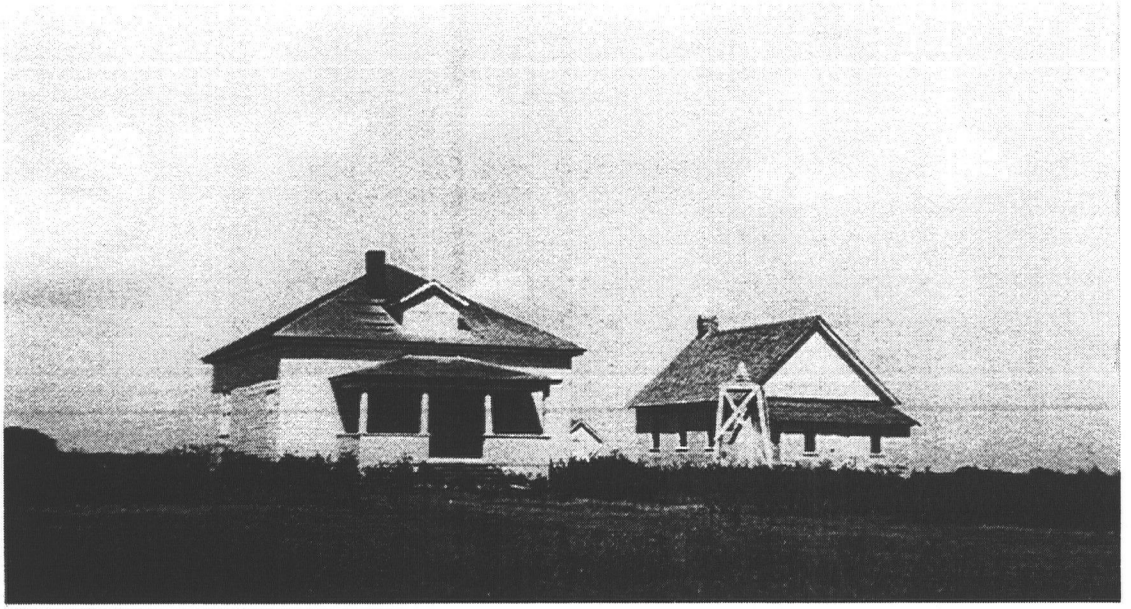


Figure 137c.
1949 view of District No. 1 Schoolhouse, Fairview School.house (Source: KSU.)



Figure 137d.
District No. 1 Schoolhouse, ca. 1983. Note loss of Fairview Schoolhouse and bell feature, presence of wood shed, addition of play equipment. (Source: NHL files.)

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

(See Figures 138a, b, c, d, e, and f.)

In 1879, the First Baptist congregation constructed a sod-up church in the newly-formed townsite of Nicodemus. A year later, the pastor of the congregation, Reverend Silas M. Lee, directed construction of a new single-story stone church on the northeast corner of Washington Avenue and Fourth Street—the current parcel associated with the existing First Baptist Church. The church maintained an active congregation through the early settlement period, and was one of two that survived the out-migration of 1888.

By the early 1900s, the old First Baptist Church limestone structure had become too small for its congregation. In 1907, construction was begun on a new and larger structure on the same site, although it is not clear whether this new structure replaced or incorporated the 1880 structure. A year later, the church was enlarged with the addition of a side chamber and corner steeple.

After the weight of the slate shingled roof caused the exterior walls to buckle in the 1920s, local resident Harry Bates constructed buttresses on the structure's east side. During the dust and windstorms of the mid-1930s, the bell tower atop the First Baptist Church roof was blown off. Due to economic conditions, the bell tower was never replaced, although oral accounts and historic photographs from the mid-twentieth century suggest that a bell was rigged to the top of the church.

Some early attempts to preserve the historic structures of Nicodemus were made during the 1940s. In 1949, the exterior facades of the First Baptist Church and the St. Francis Hotel were stuccoed to prevent further deterioration.[35] Fill, added around the building in the 1940s to improve drainage, remains on site today.

During the mid-1940s residents of the townsite began to petition the Rural Electrification Association (REA) for service to Nicodemus. On February 1, 1950, the REA provided the first electricity in town to the First Baptist Church.

In 1975, Reverend L.C. Alexander and the First Baptist congregation determined that the nearly seventy-year-old church structure was no longer large enough for the congregation and was beginning to show signs of deterioration. The group decided to construct a new First Baptist Church, and with the assistance of church members and volunteer labor, a new brick and frame church was built just north of the old one in September of 1975. The historic 1907 stone structure was later used as a Fellowship Hall and for social gatherings.[36]

The dates of origin of the existing concrete sidewalks, tree and shrub plantings, utilities, and historical marker are not currently known. With the exception of the alignment of the adjacent roads—Washington Avenue and Fourth Street—and the potential for the original First Baptist Church structure to have been incorporated into the existing structure, all of the existing landscape features documented as part of this CLR post-date the early settlement period. The First Baptist Church parcel and all of its features are character-defining.

[35] Fly, 'Into the Twentieth Century,' 76.

[36] *Ibid.*, 78.

COMPARATIVE IMAGES: FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

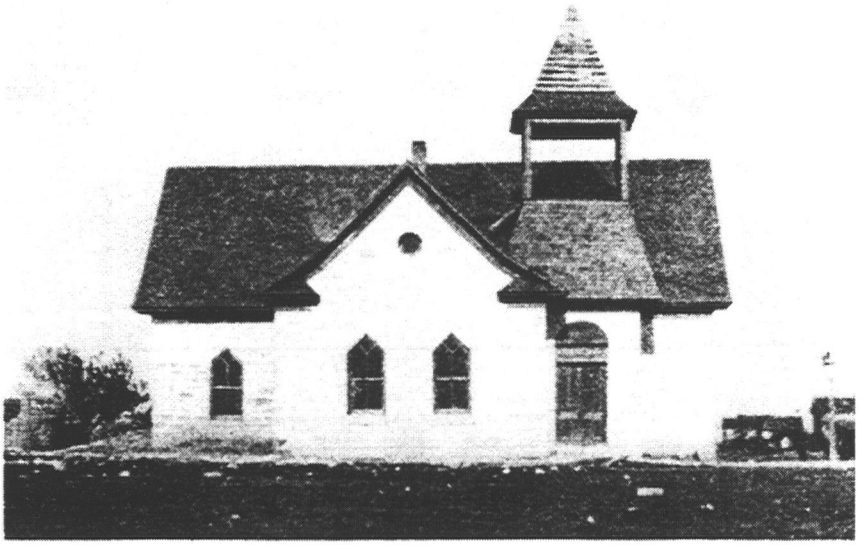


Figure 138a.
Circa 1908 view of First Baptist Church. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

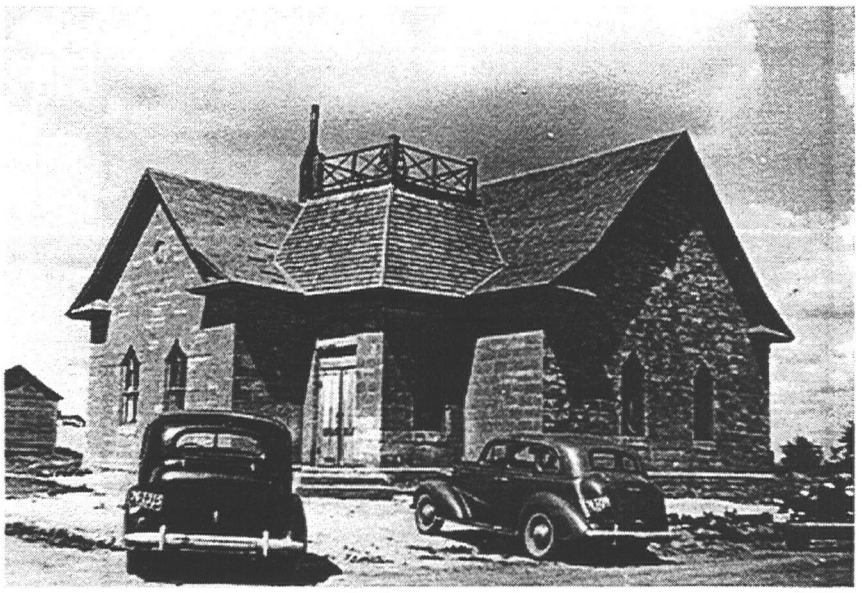


Figure 138b.
Circa 1940 view of First Baptist Church. Note the loss of the bell tower, the lack of stucco, and the small wooden support building on the left. (Source: Belleau.)

COMPARATIVE IMAGES: FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



Figure 138c.
First Baptist Church with the addition of stucco, date uncertain. (Source: UK, SRL, NHSC.)

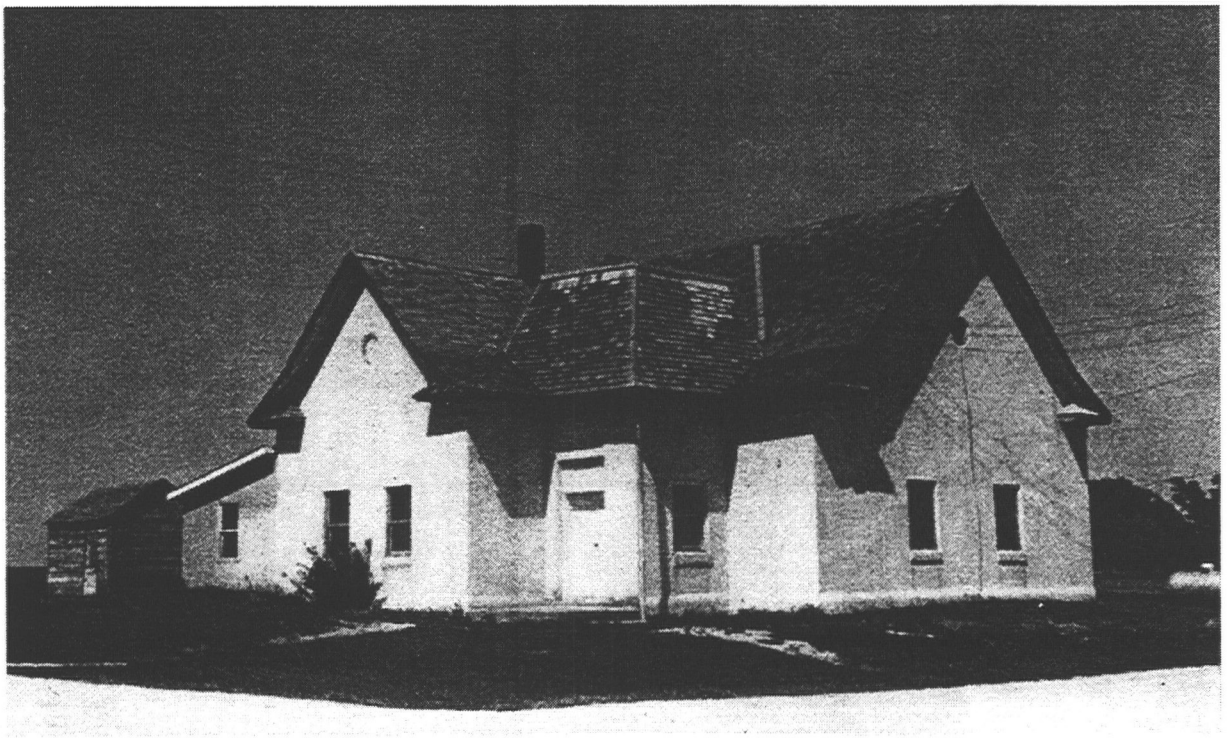


Figure 138d.
First Baptist Church, ca. 1970. Note shed to left of building, propane tank to right. (Source: KSHS.)

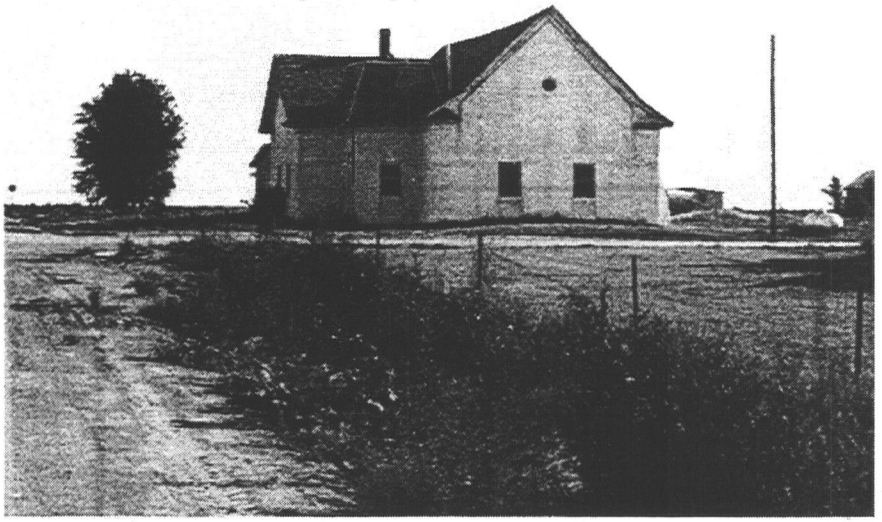


Figure 138e.
View along Fourth Street towards the First Baptist Church before the new addition. (Source: KSHS.)



Figure 138f.
View northeast towards the First Baptist Church from Fourth Street after the addition. (Source: OCULUS.)

FLETCHER-SWITZER RESIDENCE/ST. FRANCIS HOTEL

The stone core of the Fletcher-Switzer residence, also known as the St. Francis Hotel, is thought to have been constructed circa 1879–1880 by Z.T. Fletcher at the corner of Washington Avenue and Third Street. Fletcher soon established a hotel in the structure, naming it the St. Francis Hotel. This building is thought to have replaced a dugout residence constructed as early as 1878 on the same property. The St. Francis Hotel was designed with a living and dining area on the first floor and two guestrooms on the second floor. A kitchen wing adjoined the main structure to its east. The St. Francis Hotel soon became the premier hotel in town, and by 1885, the only one. In September 1887, it received a new asbestos roof. By December of the same year, preparations were being made to add another wing to the hotel. In June 1888, the St. Francis Hotel reopened with its new addition. By spring of 1886 Fletcher and his brother Thomas finished constructing in the rear of the lot a livery stable and corral which was described as 'one of the finest in the country.' The residence, which has been variously altered over the years, survives from the early settlement period, although the stable is no longer extant.

Elsewhere on the property there have been other structures over the years. The original dugout mentioned above was formerly located along Third Street at Washington Avenue. It was eventually enclosed within a limestone structure and utilized as the town's first post office. The structure was again modified for use as a garage and living quarters during the twentieth century, but was demolished in the 1940s. A cellar, windmill, and granary also likely existed on the property during the first half of the twentieth century, but these structures are no longer in evidence.

During the second quarter of the twentieth century, the St. Francis Hotel was improved by the Switzer family. As Ora Switzer recalled, "when we got it, we had so many kids, we added on rooms, and bought houses and added in there, had them moved in there. We fixed it up to suit ourselves." The stone, or oldest part of the structure, originally contained two rooms upstairs and two rooms downstairs. After the Switzer family acquired the old hotel, several new frame additions enlarged the house: "In the corner section [geographic reference?] we found a frame building, and added it in there, and I used it for my dining room. ...And then we put some more additions onto it, and made me a kitchen-dining room, and then on the other side, we made a place to go in, you know, just went around the house and made what you wanted."[37] The Switzer cellar was "kind of like a dugout ...down in the ground with a top on it, and then steps to go down in there. ...That's where we kept our potatoes."

The dates of origin of other structures and features that exist on the property, including two outbuildings, a well, plantings, and a driveway, are not currently known. Other than portions of the main structure, all landscape features appear to post-date the early settlement period. The Fletcher-Switzer property and all of its features are character-defining.

[37] Interview with Ora Switzer, 4/16/2001, 53; Appendix D "Oral History Transcriptions" of this report.

SUMMARY OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ANALYSIS ON FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY

The findings of landscape analysis raise a number of issues that may affect future management of the Nicodemus landscape.

- The determination that the period of significance is continuous and runs to the present will likely impact the development of treatment recommendations. Based on this determination, all current landscape features and systems are character-defining because they represent the lifeways of the living community. This assessment makes it difficult to justify landscape changes involving the removal of existing landscape features and the addition of features that are missing from a particular period.

- The extent of the lack of specific landscape documentation makes any treatment involving restoration and/or reconstruction to any particular time period nearly impossible.

- Development of interpretation-based interventions in the landscape will also be impacted by the ongoing period of significance. Any attempt to interpret earlier periods through landscape change may result in loss of extant surviving resources. Interpretation will necessarily rely on exhibits and guides, rather than landscape change, to tell stories.

- The absence of descendants actively occupying and using the landscape will slowly diminish the integrity of the landscape over time. Efforts to preserve and maintain landscapes will slow their deterioration, but continued loss of an active community will lead to a profound change in the nature of the site's significance. In addition, the introduction of landscape change by non-descendants will dilute the significance of the overall landscape.

- Research and physical history findings indicate that important resources survive outside of the townsite. Consideration should be given to interpreting Nicodemus by involving these resources.

- Research, documentation, and analysis conducted in support of the CLR suggest that the GMP process needs to consider the larger landscape that comprises the Nicodemus community by viewing it as a heritage tourism area that might be perpetuated through the infusion of tourism dollars. The NPS defines a heritage area as a place "where natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns [make heritage areas] representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in the areas. Continued use of the [heritage area] by people whose traditions helped shape the landscape enhances their significance." Although the situation in Nicodemus is consistent with this definition, the CLR does **not** recommend that a heritage area designation be explored. Rather, the application of the process of establishing a heritage tourism area may be appropriate in the planning for the community of Nicodemus. While the GMP process is not likely flexible enough to address stewardship, land use, tourism, and interpretation as they relate to private property, it may be possible for the NPS to provide the community with technical assistance in pursuing a heritage tourism approach to community development.

- Review of the NPS's Draft GMP indicates the importance placed by the Draft GMP team on minimizing potential visitor and NPS operational impacts to the community. This restrained and sensitive approach to visitor access and park operations typically results in minimal NPS-generated changes to the cultural landscape. For this reason, a focus on assessing landscape integrity is much less important than gaining an understanding of how extant resources may support interpretation.

- The primary stewards of landscape resources even within the NHS properties owned by the Department of the Interior will likely be, at least for the foreseeable future, private property owners and other non-federal entities.

Chapter 5



A GUIDE FOR MANAGING LANDSCAPE CHANGE

Chapter 5

A GUIDE FOR MANAGING LANDSCAPE CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

This Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) has been prepared concurrently with National Park Service (NPS) efforts to generate a General Management Plan (GMP) for this site. The other documents that are in the process of being developed are a Historic Resource Study and a Historic Structures Report (HSR) for the National Historic Site (NHS). Typically the GMP would establish the framework for what types of activities may occur in the future at a site, the overarching treatment approach appropriate to it, and the program of future uses. The Historic Resource Study helps to put a site into a historical context and suggests potential interpretive themes to interpretation planners. While these documents are in the process of being developed, the approach and guidance that they might provide are not currently available to the CLR team. In the absence of this information, the original scope of the CLR has been modified. Where originally the CLR was to include chapters on Management Issues, Treatment Recommendations & Analysis of Alternatives, Design Guidelines, and Implementation Recommendations, the CLR team has proposed this single chapter—A Guide for Managing Landscape Change. Many of the original scope items will still be addressed within the framework of this new, comprehensive chapter, but the focus has shifted to provide an understanding of a *process* recommended for managing landscape change, rather than a specific list of action items focusing exclusively on the five NHS sites.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a preservation strategy for the long-term stewardship and management of the landscape of the community of Nicodemus based on its significance, existing condition, and use, and the NPS objectives identified in their September 2000 Draft GMP. Normally, recommendations within a CLR build upon and support the vision articulated in a GMP. Because the GMP process has not progressed faster than the CLR, the recommendations presented in this chapter have been developed to remain consistent with the treatment approaches that are common to all the alternatives presented in the draft GMP. Additionally, they are based upon the historical integrity and significance of the site, and the preservation planning knowledge and experience of the CLR team. It is anticipated that the NPS will selectively integrate and implement the recommendations that support the completed GMP, and possibly discard recommendations that do not support the GMP.

Discussion of overarching issues and a vision for the future of Nicodemus precedes specific approaches to treatment, management, and stewardship at the three different levels of investigation. The overall preservation strategy presented in this chapter is comprehensive and addresses the larger landscape of the community of Nicodemus as well as the Township, Section, and NHS properties. It is supported by landscape treatment recommendations and guidelines.

This chapter is comprised of seven different sections that together make up the CLR treatment plan for Nicodemus described as follows.

1. Management Objectives and Issues

This section provides an overview of Nicodemus management objectives and issues, compiled by the CLR team from the Draft GMP and from NPS personnel involved in planning for the future of Nicodemus.

2. The CLR Team's Approach to Resource Stewardship

This portion of the chapter, which focuses on the key elements that should play a role in the future of Nicodemus, is divided into four sub-sections. These four sections address the role of interpretation in landscape management; indicate the public and private entities that might work together to envision the future of the Nicodemus community; and identify the community needs that, left unaddressed, may contribute to wholesale loss of the essential aspects of the community's character and cultural traditions. These four sub-sections are titled:

- Experiencing and Understanding Nicodemus;
- Public/Private Partnerships;
- Community Leadership and Involvement; and
- Community Benefits.

3. Adapting the Heritage Tourism Model to Nicodemus

In response to a number of conditions present at Nicodemus, the CLR team recommends that those involved in the future of Nicodemus consider adapting elements of heritage tourism planning to the framework for management and stewardship at Nicodemus. This section provides a justification for this recommendation, and various issues that should be taken into consideration if this recommendation is followed.

4. Interpretation and Visitor Access

This section proposes specific recommendations for interpretation of the history and significance of Nicodemus including themes, programs, and levels and types of appropriate potential visitor access and facilities within the Township, townsite, and the NHS.

5. Nicodemus Township Recommendations

This section provides recommendations for perpetuating rural character and the types of cooperative efforts that would support interpretation of the community of Nicodemus.

6. Nicodemus Townsite Recommendations

This section suggests specific recommendations supporting the continuity of town character and suggests appropriate cooperative means for interpreting the community of Nicodemus. This section identifies guidelines for considering and undertaking programs and initiatives to achieve the preservation and stewardship of landscapes, sites, and individual landscape features and systems.

7. Nicodemus National Historic Site Recommendations

This section suggests specific phased and prioritized recommendations for the treatment of the landscape of the five NHS sites: First Baptist Church, the Fletcher-Switzer residence, the Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse, the A.M.E. Church, and the Township Hall; and the two publicly held park parcels: the Roadside and Township Parks.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES

Introduction

This section documents specific management objectives, issues, and concerns previously raised by the NPS and others through existing planning documents as well as discussions with the CLR project team. These, in conjunction with issues typically addressed by preservation planners, have been reviewed and considered as part of the development of this chapter. While the recommendations included here respond to objectives, issues, and concerns that have been identified to date, they will likely need to be revised as new management objectives are developed and previously identified objectives are refined.

The Draft GMP states that its management objectives are "broad, conceptual descriptions of desired futures...They describe what the park could be like, based on resource conditions and visitor experiences." Given that the GMP process is ongoing, this chapter focuses on the overarching management objectives outlined in the Draft GMP so that the CLR recommendations may remain valid regardless of the final preferred alternative presented in the GMP.

Draft General Management Plan Management Objectives

The following objectives included in the Draft GMP were of particular relevance to the CLR team in developing the preservation strategy outlined later in this chapter:

- The NPS minimizes its influence on the character and continuity of the community to the extent possible.
- The NPS supports community-initiated sustainable development, which preserves the qualities of the National Historic Landmark (NHL).
- Residents, property owners, and the NPS protect and preserve the five designated historic properties, the cultural landscape, material culture, and archeological resources for greater Nicodemus.
- Because Nicodemus is a living community, the community helps define the significance of the resources. The NPS, under existing policy, law and regulation, provides technical assistance to property owners and other interested parties to encourage preservation of significant resources within the Township.

The various site-specific resource management issues and concerns documented in the Draft GMP that have also been considered by the CLR team include:

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- The NPS lacks a research base about the history, cultural landscape, ethnography, socio-anthropology and archeology of the site.
- The current owners or custodians of the significant resources probably lack the technical expertise to maintain and preserve these historic and cultural resources in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- The State Historic Preservation Office is limited in the type and amount of financial assistance that it can provide to Nicodemus, in part because the townsite lacks status as a certified local government.
- Landowners are reluctant to sell property outside of their immediate family, which in some cases hinders efforts by descendants to move back into town.
- Treatment of historic structures has become urgent due to their accelerated rate of deterioration.
- The lack of a preliminary inventory of the contents of the five historic properties limits the management of those properties.
- Treatment of the historic landscape is complicated not only by multiple ownership but also because the landscape continues to evolve and change owing to an active community.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- The NPS must respect and balance the needs of the community for privacy with the desires of the visitors to explore the townsite.
- The deteriorated present condition of the historic structures poses serious health and safety concerns.

ADMINISTRATION

- The NPS is accustomed to fee simple ownership and clear-cut authorities. It is less experienced in dealing with living communities.
- The NPS must establish the infrastructure necessary to support national historic site management. This may be expensive and could potentially damage or alter the cultural landscape.
- The park boundary is the five discontiguous properties comprising the NHS and does not include the entire NHL district.
- There is apprehension within the community, including non-resident descendants, over the role of the NPS.
- Local residents have differing opinions concerning the future of Nicodemus.
- The success of the park is closely tied to the relationships NPS may be able to form with local partners.

- Due to limited financial, technical, and staff resources, the long-term viability (sustainability) of existing local partners is questionable.

- There may be difficulties in communicating/coordinating with off-site descendants.

- The boundary map for the NHS needs correction to include all of the land in the Township Hall tract.

- The NHS lacks sufficient property within its legal boundary to accomplish significant management functions. Implementation of the plan has become urgent because of the accelerated decline in population at Nicodemus.

Other Management Issues and Concerns Identified by the NPS

On October 5, 2001, Nicodemus NHS Superintendent Steve Linderer, Chief Park Ranger Felix Revello, and Site Manager Dennis Carruth, in conjunction with Historical Landscape Architect Sherda Williams of the NPS Midwest Regional Office, and Liz Sargent of OCULUS conducted a conference call to discuss the management issues and concerns associated with the Nicodemus NHS that should be the focus of the CLR treatment plan. The issues raised during the conference call included:

- The CLR should identify character-defining landscape resources, land uses, and patterns of spatial organization and describe important physical relationships that have cultural significance, in order that these resources and relationships be protected and retained, and not be inadvertently affected by future activities. The CLR should make recommendations regarding treatments that protect the identified resources and relationships.

- The CLR should consider how the NPS can accomplish necessary stabilization, rehabilitation, and/or restoration treatments if four of the NHS properties remain in private ownership. Also, the CLR should identify what types of protective planning measures can be recommended to private owners, such as conservation or scenic easements, that can help to protect these historic properties from undesirable change.

- CLR recommendations should take into consideration the local community's reservations regarding potential federal encroachment on self-determination, and the limitations on financial opportunity and private property rights that may occur due to the federal presence within the community.

- CLR recommendations should take into consideration the potential impact of visitation on the daily life of the community, particularly the potential for visitor activities to encroach on its peace and quiet.

- The CLR should also discuss ways to facilitate the establishment of beneficial relationships between the private and public entities that have an interest in the future of Nicodemus, for example, the Nicodemus Historical Society, Buffalo Soldiers re-enactors, NPS, Kansas State Historical Society, and Graham County. How can interested entities become involved in the process of protecting, preserving, and furthering the community of Nicodemus?

- The CLR should discuss the current lack of facility infrastructure, i.e. rest rooms, motels, and restaurants, to serve the public. In addition, it should consider, if demand increases, an appropriate process for developing these facilities. In considering these issues, the CLR needs to recognize the limited administrative role of the NPS within the NHL landscape beyond the five historic properties that comprise the NHS.

- The CLR should also consider how NPS management practices might evolve should the population continue to decline, making community support of the Nicodemus townsite, visitor services, and the Homecoming celebration untenable.

- NPS has noted a lack of consensus between resident and non-resident descendants and property holders regarding the future of Nicodemus. If possible, the CLR should attempt to identify appropriate methods for establishing decision-making processes that might integrate representatives of various opinions.

- The CLR should provide general maintenance guidelines for sites presently managed by the NPS and for additional sites it might manage in the future.

- The CLR should identify sites of missing resources to protect potential archeological resources from disturbance.

- The CLR could make recommendations in support of future interpretive possibilities that identify important physical and non-physical qualities of the community, and suggest important emotional connections of the community to the landscape.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH TO RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

This section articulates the four major elements comprising the stewardship and resource management approach developed by the CLR team to address the special and unique nature of Nicodemus's physical resources and the cultural traditions. These four elements are:

- experiencing and understanding Nicodemus;

- establishing public/private partnerships;

- engendering community leadership and involvement; and

- deriving community benefits.

The living community of Nicodemus is the most important tangible resource linking the townsite's significant historical associations and the contemporary visitor. To achieve this goal, the following four elements are necessary:

- Responsible and well-managed opportunities for community members and visitors to **experience and understand** Nicodemus at interpretive, visitor services, and other tourism-related sites;

- Guidance and support for compatible and sustainable development that protects and enhances resources through **public/private partnerships** and other instruments;

- Opportunities for **community leadership and involvement** at every level, and participation and engagement in the planning process; and

- Activities and opportunities that will **benefit the community** and capitalize on tourism as a significant part of Nicodemus's overall economic development program.

Together, these key elements affecting stewardship provide a strong foundation upon which the community and the NPS might build to sustain the cultural landscape that defines the past, present, and future of Nicodemus.

Experiencing and Understanding Nicodemus

Nicodemus is comprised of tangible and intangible resources that, when combined, illuminate a complex, yet common, past. Fields, surface water, fencelines, vistas, buildings, and agriculture define this community. This CLR has focused on the tangible visible resources that can be documented and mapped. However, close investigation of primary sources such as oral histories and extant historic fabric illuminate the intangible resources that are critical to understanding this place in space and time.

Tangible resources and character-defining features such as agricultural practices, land uses within the Township and townsite, natural resources, road corridors, and domestic and farmstead complexes and patterns form indelible links to the past. Because Nicodemus has been recognized as nationally significant for its association with historic contexts ranging from Emancipation to Reconstruction and federal land acquisition and disbursement policies in the American West, it is important for resources illuminating the community's history to be preserved, maintained, and accurately presented to visitors.

Churches represent a critical touchstone to these intangible resources within Nicodemus. Both the A.M.E. and First Baptist Churches are distinctive buildings connected to the history of early settlement in Nicodemus. Moreover, they are ethnographic resources that have sheltered events important to the lives of Nicodemus residents. Without the knowledge of baptisms, weddings, and funerals that have taken place within these walls, the social meaning of these buildings is lost. Although intangible resources such as these may not be as readily available as buildings, streets, yards, views, and vistas, they can be made intellectually and emotively accessible to the general public and to other residents through interpretation—producing a more complete, and potentially engaging, visitor experience.

At Nicodemus, intangible heritage such as agricultural practices, foodways, and community customs are critical components of the society. The Homecoming celebration, which has evolved into a reunion of family and friends, appears to have a profound influence on the longevity of the community, displaying to its ability to celebrate its existence in the face of difficult economic conditions. It also enables the community to maintain a sense of cohesion, purpose, and identity. While events such as Homecoming may seem on the surface to be ephemeral, they represent a link between past and future generations of this community, wherever they currently reside.

When presenting the Nicodemus story, it will be important to provide a complete understanding of the variety and matrix of tangible and intangible resources. The responsible and well-managed presentation of resources will be a valuable tool in effectively engaging visitors and local residents alike. Because the CLR team did not include an interpretive planner, the information presented later in this chapter relating to interpretation should be considered preliminary, and is likely to evolve as interpretive planning is undertaken for Nicodemus.

Public/Private Partnerships

Site development and interpretation at Nicodemus should evolve over time, and engage public/private partnerships that determine collaboratively what is appropriate and feasible. Integrally linked to community development is the integration of interpretative programs into an overall framework of community conservation. It is hoped that interpretive programs will provide economic opportunities for residents, enhance community pride, and generate tangible public support possibly in the form of funding, in-kind assistance, and resources protection policy support, further promoting the perpetuation of the living community.

Some of the basic objectives that might drive public/private partnerships concerned with the future of Nicodemus include:

- Preservation and protection of private land and viewsheds under the purview of landowners interested in **land, scenic, and façade conservation easements** and other voluntary protective measures;

- Encouragement of the continued tradition of land stewardship as practiced by Nicodemus families through the **practices of agriculture** that are integral to the community;

- **Preservation of the Township and townsite character** that provides a physical connection with its early history and a sensitivity towards ongoing needs and uses; and

- Development of **community stewardship tools and incentives** that promote preservation and sensitive development and are responsive to the concerns and needs of property owners.

Community Leadership and Involvement

Because most of Nicodemus is under private ownership and management, property owners will need to work together as well as with public entities and agencies to plan for the future. Community members should collectively establish goals, assess resources, develop tourism products and interpretation plans, and manage, present, and interpret resources. To accomplish this, the community should form a local organization that is politically neutral and headed by elected individuals.

While the history of Nicodemus is tied to national contexts that may be best interpreted by professional historians, the story of this place is potentially much richer when also told from the point of view of the community. For example, interpretation might offer a family recipe for canning along with the facts of Nicodemus's early settlement by free African-Americans. Both ongoing community activities and past events should be presented as a comprehensive and inclusive picture for the visitor and resident alike.

Community Benefits

The viability and continuity of the Nicodemus community is of great concern to descendants, historians, and visitors alike. One of the tangible and intangible resources associated with the community that is also of critical importance to the viability of Nicodemus is agriculture, and the need for local farmers to obtain an adequate return for their efforts. Another goal is the creation of employment opportunities that might serve to attract others, particularly young people, with ties to the community to remain in or to relocate to Nicodemus. Within this context, the role of the Federal Government in the near term, as identified in the Draft

GMP, may be to provide educational programs, outreach, technical assistance, and avenues for collective discussion of ways to address mutual needs and issues.

As noted above, the viability of agriculture within the Township remains an area of primary concern. Since the establishment of Nicodemus, farming has played an integral role in supporting the community. This agricultural land use is a primary character-defining feature of Nicodemus, and has been of tantamount importance to the livelihood, self-determination, and shared experience of the community. Farmers must have a chance to earn an adequate return as encouragement to remain on their land. This is no small challenge, with the survival of farming, particularly small-family operations, threatened on many levels. Such seemingly intractable issues as the high cost of inputs, low prices for output, difficulties in acquiring the capital necessary to keep up with technological innovation, pressures to sell, intrusion of non-community members, aging farmers with no heirs or heirs who do not want to farm, and changing national tastes and policies, make farming one of the most difficult businesses to pursue. Creative ideas, such as the current co-operative project marketing Nicodemus flour and dough might provide a portion of the incentives necessary to ensure the survival of community-based agriculture in Nicodemus for the foreseeable future. Another potential activity might entail partnering with the US Department of Agriculture to organize agricultural education days to help local farmers develop sustainable enterprises. Attention to the issue by county and state agencies may result in creative and innovative economic development and land use policies that support agriculture.

Recommendations for continued stewardship should be based on voluntary and incentive-based strategies. Agricultural practices, however, should not be frozen in time; modern agriculture should be sustained, and allowed to continue to evolve.

Also of concern is the provision of employment and income opportunities. The retention of historic agricultural practices is one way of doing this; the establishment of retail and other businesses that respect and enhance the quality of life in Nicodemus is another. As the community, townsite, and Township are presented as potential visitor attractions, marketing strategies and carrying capacity studies should be developed in conjunction with residents and business owners. Moreover, a balance must be struck between creating the opportunities for spending that form the basis for tourism-dependent economic development and the conservation of the community. Additional benefits to the community might include:

- the prestige and quality of townsite and Township stewardship and development that will enhance the area's attraction to new investors and residents; and

- the amenities, infrastructure improvements, and added maintenance that come from tourism, which will also benefit residents.

ADAPTING THE HERITAGE TOURISM MODEL TO NICODEMUS

The research, documentation, and analysis conducted as part of the CLR suggest that the GMP process needs to address the larger landscape that comprises the Nicodemus community. If this is done, consideration should be given to viewing the larger landscape, including the townsite and Township, for its potential to attract heritage tourism. This is not to say that heritage area designation should be explored. Rather, the process of establishing a heritage area may be an appropriate planning tool for the community of Nicodemus, providing more flexibility than the typical GMP process in dealing with private property issues as they relate to stewardship, land use, tourism, and interpretation.

According to Shelley Mastran, the author of *Getting Started in Heritage Area Development*, a National Trust for Historic Preservation Information Booklet, a heritage area

> is a place with a distinctive history and geography where residents seek to develop their natural and cultural heritage to enhance the region's well being. Heritage areas have identifiable, nationally important resources, a story of broad interest to tell, and public-private support for investment in the community. Thus, a heritage area is both a geographic region—a place—and a framework for development—a process. The process involves building partnerships that will work to educate residents and visitors about the region, protect the best of its natural and cultural heritage, and enhance the area's economy through business investment, job expansion, and tourism.

Much of this definition fits the nature and character of the community of Nicodemus—its residents near and far, and their land. The strategies, approaches, and possible solutions for regional resource stewardship and economic development which have been applied to heritage areas elsewhere in the country might also be applied to Nicodemus in order to enhance and sustain its economic, cultural, and spiritual vitality. Some of the lessons learned elsewhere are described below.

How will planning and implementation going to be effected at Nicodemus?

Existing heritage areas provide potential management models such as:

- a board of trustees with standing and ad-hoc committees;
- a non-profit community development corporation with a board of directors and paid staff; and
- a management entity with members representing various interests.

According to Mastran,

> Regardless of the exact form the management entity takes, it is important that the organization embody several key characteristics:
>
> - It should be collaborative and representative, so that all the important partners in the area have a voice at the table;
> - It should be credible, with respected individuals who can suspend personal agendas for the goals of the community or communities involved;
> - It should have authority, either on its own or through endorsement of a governmental entity;
> - It should have a broad, overarching vision that encompasses all of the various goals and objectives of the interests in the region; and
> - It should be committed.

How will the diverse needs of the Nicodemus community be met?

Strong partnerships will be needed to draw upon a wide variety of sources of support to address such issues as resource conservation, sustainable agriculture, heritage tourism, economic development, recreation, public education, and historic preservation. Potential partners involved in land conservation and the maintenance and enhancement of the Nicodemus community's viability include:

- NHS property owners;
- resident NHL property owners;
- non-resident NHL property owners;
- descendants residing outside of the NHL;
- interested residents of Nicodemus Township and the region;
- Nicodemus Township Board;
- local non-profit, heritage, educational, and civic groups including the Nicodemus Historical Society and The Nicodemus Group;
- Nicodemus West;
- National Park Service;
- local governments and communities including Graham County, Hill City, and Bogue;
- local and regional tourism organizations and businesses, economic development entities, and agricultural and commerce advocacy entities;
- Highway 24 Solomon Valley Heritage Alliance, Inc.;
- Kansas colleges and universities and local school districts;
- Kansas historical, agricultural and rural heritage organizations including the Kansas Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc., and the Kansas Rural Center;

- state government agencies including the Kansas State Historical Society, Kansas Department of Agricultural, the Kansas Department of Transportation, Kansas State Conservation Commission, and Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing (Travel and Tourism Program and Division of Community Development);
- land trusts including the Kansas Land Trust;
- National Trust for Historic Preservation; and
- US Department of Agriculture.

The Need for Community Organization and Leadership

This CLR identifies the clear relationships between resource preservation, interpretation, and cultural heritage development—the landscape features and charactertistics spanning the different scales of Nicodemus Township, the townsite and the five sites of the NHS—that must be preserved as part of a larger strategy for interpretation and possible heritage tourism development. The loss of the rural agricultural landscape owned, occupied, and managed by Nicodemus's descendants; of a living Nicodemus townsite; and of the few remaining resources surviving from the earlier settlement period will be devastating to future programs involving visitor access and interpretation. Resource preservation, as well as all other aspects of stewardship and interpretation, must be undertaken with the active and substantial participation and leadership of a local, community-based organization working with the NPS. Establishment of such an organization will ensure that diverse resources are appropriately managed in an appropriate manner to support the community's goals.

The issue of which organizational approach is best suited for the community of Nicodemus has been addressed to varying levels of detail in past planning documents including the May 1993 *Nicodemus, Kansas Special Resource Study*; the March 1992 *Nicodemus Historical Society Position Paper* appended to the May 1993 *Nicodemus, Kansas Special Resource Study*; and the September 2000 Draft GMP for Nicodemus NHS.

Though past and current planning documents recognize the need for some sort of mechanism for community involvement, the CLR highly recommends that a community-based organization be formed to promote and ensure stewardship and survival of community resources and character. A community-based organization could also secure technical expertise, operational guidance, and even funding to promote stewardship.

Though the formal incorporation of the townsite may appear to address many needs, including financial, such a measure would not specifically address the stewardship of Township resources that will be critical to retaining the character of the community and conveying the story of Nicodemus to visitors. Consideration should be given to establishing a community development corporation or similar entity that is led by community-based constituent groups and is able to seek out and secure funding from a variety of private and public sources. Such an entity could also work with the NPS and non-profit entities to receive and hold conservation and other types of easements to protect rural and townsite lands, and individual resources such a buildings. The establishment of a "Friends of" group should also be considered. A "Friends of" group would provide guidance and direction and could consist of representatives from the NPS, Nicodemus descendants, the state Historical Society, local and state governments, nationally-renowned African-American scholars, corporate and private sponsors, and specialized preservation and heritage development professionals. The "Friends of" group, community development entity, and the NPS would work in concert to achieve the goals and objectives identified by the community.

INTERPRETATION AND VISITOR ACCESS

This section focuses on the relationship between resource preservation, interpretation, and visitor access issues. The purpose of exploring these issues within a CLR is to better understand the interpretive potential of identified landscape resources, link preservation of landscape resources to interpretive goals and objectives, and understand the levels and thresholds of change of sensitive landscape resources that may be impacted by interpretation and visitor access-related development. This section presents background information on previously identified interpretive themes for Nicodemus and additional themes resulting from the CLR landscape analysis. It also includes information on past and current interpretive programs and activities within the townsite and Township, a discussion of regional tourism issues,

and resource preservation recommendations associated with townsite and Township visitor access and interpretation.

Interpretive Approach and Themes

INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

In her article "African American Heritage Tourism," published in *Preservation Issues* by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Historic Preservation Program, Angela da Silva provides guidance on undertaking interpretation at an ethnic cultural site:

> There are some basic principles that should be adhered to for the true experience of heritage tourism. First the site must be authentic and be a quality presentation. Second, the site must be preserved at all costs; and the very tourism that it was meant to attract must not adversely affect it. ...Most ethnic cultures take an affront [to] what they consider a distortion of the truth. And last, when you are assessing the sites for possible development, collaboration with the local ethnic community is a must. Many times only the local ethnic community has the emotional understanding of the significance of a building, or even a corner or a vacant lot.

First and foremost, interpretation at Nicodemus must involve knowledgeable historical experts. Nationally renowned historians—recognized experts on the subjects of Reconstruction and African-American history in the West—should be directly involved with and provide the necessary framework for all interpretation. It is important to understand, as outlined in the May 1993 *Nicodemus, Kansas Special Resource Study*, that Nicodemus is unique within the National Park System and that though African-American Western history continues to be investigated and developed, it still remains much less understood than other aspects of the history of the West. Nicodemus presents a special opportunity to expand on and enhance African-American interpretation within the National Park System. The historical experts should work closely with the community and descendants to accurately and adequately understand the history of Nicodemus and tell authentic and compelling stories. This also provides an opportunity for the community to collaborate with the NPS to ensure that an African-American perspective is made a part of all aspects of interpretation. The Nicodemus Historical Society is the most appropriate organization to take an active role in the preparation of a historical framework for interpretation at Nicodemus. This approach will ensure that the community and its rich history are presented to the public with the utmost accuracy. Residents should be given opportunities to provide input and to contribute to the development of approaches, content, and programs that they believe are important to the interpretation of their own history. They should be provided with and afforded every opportunity to have their voices heard.

Interpretive plans for cultural sites like Nicodemus should present high-quality information that elevates the visitor's understanding of the significant characteristics of the place, enabling the visitor to enjoy the community in an appropriate manner. As the experience of strolling through townsite streets, gazing at buildings, and enjoying views and vistas is a valuable part of any interpretive program, specific measures must be taken to minimize the impact of such activities on the integrity of the place as a whole, especially sensitive areas, and its extant resources.

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Information on interpretive themes is outlined within previously prepared planning documents including the September 2000 Draft GMP for Nicodemus NHS,[1] which states:

> Nicodemus is a symbol of black pioneer spirit. It represents the rejection of rampant racism and the inauguration of the African American struggle to overcome social, economic, and physical obstacles. Today, the physical legacy of Nicodemus can be felt in the buildings that survive there. The emotional legacy of Nicodemus can be felt in the determination to succeed that permeates the stories of the people of Nicodemus, and it continues to be reflected in the proud memories that live in the hearts of residents and descendants. The following interpretive themes were developed to explain those legacies.
>
> 1. The continuous occupancy of Nicodemus, Kansas, is an expression of African American

1 These draft interpretive themes may evolve during the comprehensive public involvement process for the General Management Plan.

perseverance and struggle of black emigrants as they journeyed west into an unknown and often difficult physical environment in order to participate in the American Dream.

2. Nicodemus arose from the efforts of an organized group of African Americans who wanted to create a supportive, viable, black 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.

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

4. 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.

5. The annual Emancipation Celebration began in 1878 and continues today. It is an African American traditional celebration and an expression that fosters the continued reconnection to the physical place of Nicodemus and the renewal of family and community ties with its residents, off-site descendants, and the African American community at large.

In addition to and complementing the interpretive themes presented in the Draft GMP, the following topics might help to illuminate these themes:

Reconstruction

Effects of Jim Crow Laws—the Kentucky Experience
Re-establishment of African American Family Life—
Post- Civil War
Life in Kentucky—Pre-Migration

Migration

Role of the Railroad—Cincinnati Southern Railroad/Kansas Pacific Railroad
Role of African-American Churches
Role of Town Speculators
Migration Groups
Exodusters and the Role of Pap Singleton

Settlement

Homesteading
Townsite Organization, Selection, and Platting
Group Arrival and Settlement Patterns
(Kentucky Immigrants vs. Exodusters)

Survival

Establishing Schools, Churches, and Social Organizations
Establishing Businesses
Emancipation Celebration
Housing and Living Conditions
Farming Practices
Family Life and Genealogical Connections, which provide a strong 'glue' for maintaining the extended community

The Era of Decline

Role of the Railroad in the Decline
Dust Bowl Years and the Great Depression

Preservation Era

National Historic Landmark Designation
National Historic Site Designation

Community Festivals and Recreation

Emancipation Celebration, Pioneer Day, Founders Day
Sports, Teams, and Sports Figures

The CLR team has identified landscape resources linked to these interpretive topics. Though an interpretation plan has not been prepared for Nicodemus, the identification of these topics has contributed to the development of the recommendations included below for the preservation and stewardship of landscapes resources within the Township, townsite and NHS.

Heritage Tourism—A Regional Context

As interpretation planning for Nicodemus progresses, it may be useful to explore opportunities to link Nicodemus with other regional and even national heritage tourism initiatives. There are many possible interpretive themes associated with Nicodemus that could be tied to related sites throughout Kansas and the Midwest, encouraging visitors and tourists to embark on an extended vacation to understand various aspects of a historical period or topic. Such a tour would make it more likely for visitors from other areas to plan a trip to the more remote regions of the High Plains.

Encompassing Kansas and its immediate environs, the Great Plains is a landscape central to our national sense of place. It is a region where the intersection of rural and urban landscapes can be read along an unfolding grid pattern of roads, railways, fencelines, and fields. Within this pattern, natural and manmade features form intricate and interdependent systems that trace the cultural history of this unique environment. Framed by this landscape, the Township of Nicodemus might be interpreted within the broader context of heritage sites throughout the Great Plains. The following themes have been developed with this in mind.

Reconstruction

- Reconstruction in the West—The Pull
- Reconstruction in the East—The Push

Westward Expansion—Migration and Settlement

- Planned Migration—Planned Towns (Black Towns in Kansas)
- Unplanned Migration—The Exodusters
- Modes of Transportation and Routes
- Town Development and Land Speculation
  - Planned Agricultural Communities (Hill City)
  - Ethnic Communities (Damar-French Canadian)
  - Railroad Communities and Effects of the Railroad on Development (Bogue)

Daily Life on the Plains

- Education
- Housing
- Religion
- Business
- Social
- Family[2]
- Farming

Civil Rights in the West

- Self Movement to Ensure Civil Rights
- Role of Race and Government
- Political Leaders

The African-American Western Military Experience

- Kansas African-American Military—Civil War
- Kansas African-American Military—Buffalo Soldiers

A REGIONAL MODEL—THE GOLDEN CRESCENT

An existing regional tourism initiative that could serve as an example or model for how Nicodemus could participate in a geographically broad, regional heritage tourism initiative with a range of interpretive themes is the Golden Crescent of Georgia and Florida. According to the Golden Crescent web site[3]

> The Golden Crescent region, increasingly threatened by development and population growth, is part of the nation's common heritage and worthy of efforts to understand and protect its incomparable resources. To enhance these efforts, the National Park Service Southeast Region produced the Golden Crescent World Wide Web site as part of the broader Florida/Georgia Initiative. This initiative relies

[2] Genealogical linkages provides a strong "glue" for maintaining this extended community.

on broad-based partnerships with federal, state, and local entities to foster greater awareness of the unique natural and cultural resources of the project area.

According to the NPS, "the Golden Crescent runs in a wide swath along the Atlantic coast from Savannah to Cape Canaveral and inland towards Tallahassee," and "is remarkably rich in history and prehistory." The major topics interpreted in the Golden Crescent include:

- Mounds and Rings—Ancient Builders Leave Mysterious Remains
- African-American Heritage—Struggles and Achievement Through the Centuries
- Resort Era—Winter Homes of America's Industrial Tycoons
- Coastal Defense—Fortifications Defend New World Possessions
- Plantation Agriculture—Cotton and Rice Production for a World Market
- Clash of Colonial Empires—Battles of Old World Foes in the New Continent

Of the numerous sites supporting the six major topics, those relating to African-American Heritage—Struggles and Achievement Through the Centuries—include:

- Fort Mose, the first known independent African-American community on the continent located in St. Augustine, Florida;
- Dorchester School, a school in Liberty County, Georgia;
- Bethune-Cookman, a college located in Daytona Beach, Florida;
- Hog Hammock on Sapelo Island and Half Moon Bluff, two isolated communities preserving traditional culture on the Georgia coast;
- Union (Freedman's) Bank, Florida A&M University, and C. K. Steele Memorial in Tallahassee, Florida;
- Olustee Battlefield in Florida;
- First African and First Bryan Baptist Churches and the King-Tisdell Cottage, all located in Savannah, Georgia;
- American Beach in Jacksonville, Florida; and
- Bethel Baptist Institutional Church in Florida.

Regional Themes

This section discusses three conceptual themes intended to serve as a catalyst for future interpretive planning at Nicodemus within a regional context. These themes were developed with the idea that existing resources within the townsite and Township could be linked to regional and national heritage tourism initiatives.

POTENTIAL THEME 1: THE BLACK WEST: NEW LANDS AND PROMISED FREEDOM

The period immediately following Reconstruction prompted land speculation in the Western territories and new opportunities for African Americans living in former slave states. Modern-day visitors travelling through Nicodemus Township could explore a number of early speculative communities associated with the migration of African Americans, and understand the connections to the slave states from which African Americans came.

Within the Township, resources such as the former site of Welton/Scruggs's Grove and social pillars such as the First Baptist Church and Township Hall tie cultural traditions brought from the South to the evolution of the Midwestern community of Nicodemus.

Nearby towns such as Hill City and Stockton are examples of other early communities. En route from the East and South, connections can be drawn to Topeka, both a hub for the Underground Railroad during the Civil War and for immigration into Kansas after Reconstruction ended; Georgetown and Maysville, Kentucky (the location of the National Underground Railroad Museum), and portions of Mississippi, areas from where Nicodemus settlers came. Langston, Oklahoma, an African-American town settled by E.P.

[3] The Internet address of this site is: http://www.cr.nps.gov/goldcres/index.html. Another potential site of interest as a model is the "Bus to Destiny: The Olive B. McLin Community History Project," at http://www.nelson.usf.edu/mclin/.

McCabe, a former resident of Nicodemus, and Buxton, Ontario, Canada, are also significant links. There are likely many other sites and towns that can be added to the list, providing visitors with a sense of the breadth and strength of the connections between the communities where former slaves and their families settled. Sites with similar histories, such as Buxton, celebrate Homecoming and their roles in the Underground Railroad, and could be highlighted as part of this interpretive theme.

Other known African-American towns and settlements in Kansas include:

- Singleton's Colony, Cherokee County
- Dunlap Colony, Morris County
- Morton City, Hodgeman County
- Rattlebone Hollow, Mississippi Town, Hoggs Town, and Quindaro (all incorporated in Kansas City)
- Wabusee Colony, and The Bottoms (incorporated in Topeka)

Visitors could also be directed to sites important to the Civil Rights movement such as the Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Site in Topeka and the numerous markers of the conflicts in Mississippi and Alabama. The Black American West Museum and Heritage Center in Denver, Colorado, preserves and documents the history and stories of African Americans who helped to develop the American West, and would provide another regional link for visitors.

Urban neighborhoods in Kansas City and St. Louis also include resources that are tied to this theme. A stop in Kansas City's 18th and Vine neighborhood and historic district demonstrates the lives of African Americans in an urban context. Sites that can be linked to this theme include the Black Archives of Mid-America (2033 Vine Street) and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (1601 East 18th Street). Nearby, is the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center (3700 Blue Parkway) where the history of Bruce R. Watkins, a black community leader, and other notable black Kansans is commemorated. East of Kansas City in St. Louis is another important urban neighborhood known as "The Ville." The first fully self-contained black neighborhood in the Midwest, this neighborhood is now attracting the attention of preservationists. Also of importance is the Old Courthouse (Broadway and Market), where Dred Scott filed a suit to gain his freedom in 1846, and Scott Joplin House State Historic Site (2658 Delmar Boulevard), the home of the "King of Ragtime."

POTENTIAL THEME 2: "WITH ALL ADVANTAGES DERIVED FROM A RAILROAD": TOWN DEVELOPMENT AROUND NEW TRANSPORTATION

The presence of the railroad contributed to the success or failure of many communities in the Midwest. While nearby Hill City and Bogue benefited railroad connections, Nicodemus did not. Visitors travelling east-west along US Highway 24 can see the effects of the development of this transportation system today. That Nicodemus survived the bypassing of the railroad is a substantial testimony to the viability and strength of the social fabric of the town.

Regionally, there are many historic sites and attractions that trace the transportation history of northwestern Kansas as a microcosm of the Midwest. These include the area's earliest form of public transportation—the stage coach—interpreted within the town of Norton at its historic Stage Coach Station thirty-five miles to the northwest, and railroad history interpreted at the Ellis Railroad Museum west of Hays along Interstate 70. Along US Highway 24 at the Cottonwood Ranch ten miles to the west of Hill City, visitors can experience the impact of the automobile and the trucking industry on the northwestern Kansas landscape.

POTENTIAL THEME 3: SURVIVAL ON THE PLAINS

Traffic on trails leading west coupled with the reaction of American Indians to increased repression led to the establishment of numerous forts in Kansas. Once established, these forts maintained peace among the tribes, as well as between American Indians and new immigrants to the west.

Fort Leavenworth, the first of such fortifications, was established in 1827 and is still in use today. It is the location of the Buffalo Soldier Monument honoring the African-American 9th and 10th Calvary regiments. In addition to Leavenworth, seven forts stretching from Junction City to Hays express this period of history. The founders of Nicodemus arrived at the end of the Indian Wars era on the Great Plains, which afforded them an increase in security against attack by Indians. Life on the western Plains remained a tremendous challenge, however, particularly due to the lack of housing and farm equipment, and the isolation of the new community. In

1878, the earliest settlers were forced to solicit aid from charitable organizations located in "the eastern part of the state. They stored the subsistence aid that they received in a sod commissary."[4] Although Nicodemus had elected to cease soliciting aid by 1879, a Freedmen's Relief Association, organized in that year by Governor St. John, attempted to provide food, shelter, and clothing to blacks arriving from the South during the Exoduster movement.[5]

For many settlers, life on the High Plains was sometimes a difficult proposition. A scarcity of building materials and ever-changing and unpredictable weather conditions often resulted in sparse and harsh living. In Nicodemus and other nineteenth-century African-American settlements like Langston, Oklahoma, housing conditions greatly depended on individual economic circumstances. Many people in Nicodemus and Langston began a homestead, or claim on the land, with an inexpensive cellar or dugout. As residents prospered and building materials were adapted or became available through more efficient transportation, cut stone and frame buildings were constructed. Archeological investigations have the potential to yield additional information relating to this topic.

This evolution of building form and material is evident in the Nicodemus townsite and in other nearby landscapes. The Prairie Museum, located approximately 35 miles west of Nicodemus along U.S. Rte. 24, interprets the human response to the prairie and the conditions of northwestern Kansas. Visitors heading westward along Interstate 70 may visit the Pioneer Museum near Goodland.

Current Tourism Activities and Educational Programs

In some form or another, interpretation and education has likely occurred within the community of Nicodemus for many years. Stories have been passed on to younger generations and the community has imparted its significance and history to the public via special events and celebrations. Following are current interpretive and educational programs and activities occurring at Nicodemus.

HOMECOMING

According to the March 1992 *Nicodemus Historical Society Position Paper*, this celebration is held each year during the last weekend in July. Currently, the event is filled with scheduled activities ranging from a parade to guest speakers. The Nicodemus Historical Society has taken an active role in ensuring that there are educational activities during the celebration. These activities may include, but are not limited to, heritage and cultural workshops, guest speakers, and artists. Other activities that have been integral in past celebrations include a community dinner, live music, platform dancing, and baseball games. Homecoming is also considered to extend beyond the weekend. Over time, it is projected that the event will draw more visitors and attendees than can be accommodated during a single weekend.

WALKING TOURS

A walking tour and guide brochure provided by the NPS is made available at the Township Hall, which temporarily houses the NPS visitor contact station. The walking tour provides guidance on the location of the five NHS historic buildings and other points of interest within the townsite.

EXHIBIT

The NPS has developed a museum exhibit that is currently housed within the Township Hall. The exhibit is composed of interpretive panels that illustrate various thematic aspects of the history of the townsite.

AUTO TOURS

The Nicodemus Historical Society has provided personal guided tours since 1990. These auto tours take place within the Nicodemus townsite and Nicodemus and Wild Horse Townships, and on occasion in nearby Rooks County. The tour includes visits to the Nicodemus townsite, the Scruggs's Grove site, the town of Bogue, the Samuels Cemetery, the Mount Olive Cemetery, the Fairview farm site, the Nicodemus Cemetery, and a dugout in Rooks County. Most auto tours are provided in the tour guide's vehicle or the visitor group's van.

[4] National Park Service, *Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas*, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1986, 8.

[5] Kansas State Historical Society, *Historic Preservation in Kansas; Black Historic Sites: A Beginning Point*. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1977, 16.

BUS TOURS

The Nicodemus Historical Society has provided personal guided tours for tour bus groups since 1990. Similar to the auto tours, the bus tours take place within the townsite and Township, and includes visits to specific sites in Wild Horse Township near Bogue and on occasion to the dugout site in nearby Rooks County.

WAGON TOURS

The Nicodemus Livery Company has provided horse-drawn wagon tours since 1999. These tours are provided in a custom box wagon that seats twelve people and is drawn by two Belgian draft horses. The wagon tours are provided in the townsite via a loop that begins at the Township Hall and includes stops at the Fletcher-Switzer residence, First Baptist Church, Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse, Nicodemus Historical Society, A.M.E. Church, and Roadside Park, before returning to the Township Hall.

The Nicodemus Livery Company also provides overland covered wagon tours in a ten-seater covered flare box wagon pulled by two Belgian draft horses. The tours occur on the 160-acre historic Crescent Valley Farm located approximately one and one-half miles west of the townsite. The overland tour length is approximately four miles. A large campsite is utilized at the farm where outdoor meals and barbecues are prepared. Other recreational activities are held at the site including hunting, fishing in Spring Creek, camping, skeet shooting, and outdoor educational and history programs.

Educational Programs

In addition to the programs and activities associated with special events and tours, The Nicodemus Group and the Nicodemus Livery Company have on various occasions provided educational/interpretive programs and activities. At times, the Nicodemus Livery Company engages residents as interpreters at the five NHS sites. Many scheduled activities take place in and around the Township Hall. Presenters and staff dress in period attire and play roles as living history characters from the Black West or as particular Nicodemus characters. Many women from the community present history and demonstrate various activities and assist participants. These educational programs and activities are targeted for educators, small school groups, senior groups, and general travel groups.

An annual Teachers' Study Tour is sponsored for Kansas educators, including college and university staff and public school teachers and administrators from across the state. This educational program provides educators with an opportunity to undertake an in-depth study of African-American history in the West and also receive college-level course credit.

Efforts to develop a curriculum using the Nicodemus NHS as a teaching tool are being undertaken and coordinated by The Nicodemus Group, Nicodemus Livery Company, and the Graham County School District. In addition, The Nicodemus Group and the Nicodemus Historical Society provide Kansas schools with interpretive programs on Nicodemus and the history of African Americans in the West.

Interpretation Recommendations

(see figure 139. Township auto and bus tour, and figure 140. Townsite walking and wagon tour)

Interpretation at Nicodemus currently occurs in disparate ways; however, both the community and the NPS have a common goal of enhancing interpretation. A visitor center or orientation facility could provide background, context, and an introduction to the community. Visitors could be directed from this orientation site to travel to the townsite and the Township for more detailed site-specific interpretation. Interpretation within the townsite could be focused on the early settlement period. Interpretive themes could include current and historic community life, governance, religion, and lifeways, within the framework of visiting the five NHS sites, other historic sites within the townsite, new interpretive facilities, and by traversing some of the streets of the townsite. Interpretation could be provided through enhancing current personal services interpretation (e.g. guided tours) and establishing new programs. Township interpretation could occur by enhancing current auto, bus, and wagon tours, and by establishing such new forms of access as bike tours.

The following recommendations, many developed as part of the March 1992 *Nicodemus Historical Society Position Paper*, should be considered when developing an interpretation plan for the larger community of Nicodemus. The purpose of outlining interpretive opportunities is to develop the potential linkage between programs, activities, and exhibits and the resources of the Township and townsite landscapes. In addition, the recommendations are meant to underscore the important of sustaining community-generated, implemented, and operated interpretation as a means for sustaining existing cultural traditions.

WEB SITE

Though the NPS, Graham County, and the Graham County Historical Society web sites have pages devoted to Nicodemus, consideration should be given to developing a separate Nicodemus community web site that reflects the collective identity of all partners involved in the preservation and stewardship of Nicodemus. This site could at a minimum provide links to all of the related sites, as well as others that address Nicodemus and its history, such as the Nicodemus Flour Co-op and the Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance site. The new site could provide information about events and activities within Nicodemus, ongoing efforts to preserve the community, and research projects, papers, and other scholarly works touching upon the themes and contexts of Nicodemus's history. The site might also serve as a source for research materials, providing a master bibliography of references relating to Nicodemus.

WALKING TOUR

The current walking tour should be enhanced by planning, designing, and installing a system of new wayside exhibits at the five NHS sites, and at other sites that support interpretive objectives. Permission must be secured to install exhibits about features located on private property. However, sites that might be of interest include: the Jerry Scruggs residence site, the town well site, agricultural activities within the townsite, Mathew Dugout site, Fairview Schoolhouse site, Masonic Hall monument/site. Primary sources, such the late nineteenth or twentieth century streetscape photographs, should be incorporated into exhibit design and could be sited to replicate these views, illustrating the changing character of the townsite over time. A wayfinding, directional, and informational sign system should be designed and installed to support any tours that are developed. However, these systems should be minimized and tours should rely on printed information as much as feasible to avoid cluttering the community with contemporary signs.

AUTO, BUS, AND BIKE TOURS

The current auto tour within the Township and other related areas should be enhanced to include a system of wayside pull-offs and a brochure. Minimal directional and informational sign systems will be required to ensure that the auto tour is functional. Wayside exhibits could also support bus tours. To avoid unnecessary impacts to the townsite, autos, buses, and other visitor vehicles should be restricted from accessing the townsite.

Consideration should be given to establishing bicycle tours, including the development of a bike livery, depending on market demand. Bike tours could be guided and self-guided following the same routes as an auto tour. Consideration should also be given to exploring the accommodation of large groups of cyclists visiting and touring Nicodemus.

Outlined below are features and sites within the Township and other related areas that could potentially support interpretation as part of an auto and bus tour. These identified resources and sites are in addition to and complement sites already visited as part of the established auto and bus tours.

- South Fork Solomon River;
- Spring Creek;
- sites of limestone quarrying;
- individual farmsteads (to understand local farming practices, current and historic);
- both historic and modern roads;
- sites that support an understanding of High Plains ecology, the links between precipitation and vegetation, the local responses including crop and livestock choices, and opportunities to collect wild plants;
- sites of former features and locations where important people lived or worked, including early settlement dugouts or sod dwellings, farmsteads; and
- high points that provide expansive views and vistas, and the potential for interpretation of a variety of issues.

EDWARD P. MCCABE DAY

October 10th was designated Edward P. McCabe Day by former Governor Mike Hayden, and a black tie banquet was sponsored in October of 1991 by the Nicodemus Historical Society. It is recommended that an annual event and banquet to celebrate Edward P. McCabe's role and accomplishments as the Nicodemus Town Company secretary be considered.

FOUNDERS DAY

Formalization of a Founders Day event, which has been held in the past during the month of September, should be considered. This event could demonstrate the founding of Nicodemus through living history programs showcasing the lifeways of early settlers including the preparation of food, and the other aspects of daily life. The story of how American Indians assisted settlers could also be interpreted during this event.

PIONEER DAYS

Consideration should be given to establishing a special event during the spring or fall to interpret the broader pioneer experience with activities and temporary themed environments situated throughout the townsite.

ANNUAL BALL

It is recommended that an annual ball be considered to draw interested people from across the US. This event would provide non-residents the opportunity to come to Nicodemus and meet the people of Nicodemus. This event could be held in conjunction with other special events.

COMMUNITY GARDEN DEMONSTRATION AREA

A community garden should be considered within the townsite that would demonstrate planting and garden practices, both past and current. The produce could be sold or used to support other interpretive activities and programs such as canning and pickling demonstrations during Pioneer Days.

AGRICULTURAL DEMONSTRATION AREAS

Small-scale crop demonstration fields could be developed within selected open field areas of the townsite that would support interpretation of farm crops and other agricultural practices. The Kansas Black Farmers Association would be an appropriate organization to involve in this type of project.

WORKING DEMONSTRATION FARM

A working farm could be interpreted within the Township and accessed by auto and bus. An existing farm or abandoned site could be developed to support interpretation of the broad spectrum of past to present farming and farm management practices. The farm could demonstrate farming practices and crops associated with different periods of the community's history.

FARM EQUIPMENT EXHIBIT

A farm equipment exhibit or museum could be established in new or existing buildings in the townsite or at a demonstration farm.

EDUCATIONAL SUMMER CAMP

A themed pioneer educational and interpretive camp could be established within the Township.
The camp could offer limited and extended programs and could focus on youth, families, and organizations such as scouts and clubs.

NEW POST OFFICE

Because Nicodemus is the site of one of the earliest recorded black-owned and operated post offices, the feasibility of re-establishing a post office within the Township should be considered. This new facility could be designed to support the interpretation of this aspect of the history of Nicodemus. Planners should explore the possibility of issuing a commemorative stamp in conjunction with the 125th or 150th anniversary of Nicodemus. CLR reviewer Edgar Hicks noted:

> As a philatelist and postal history enthusiast, I believe artifacts can be assembled to recreate the [Nicodemus] post office with the help of the American Philatelic Society (APS) based in College Station, Pennsylvania. The APS (http://www.stamps.org) has 60,000 dues paying members who have a specific interest and study unit that focuses on African American ephemerals. The resources and research that this group has access to may be postally beneficial. I obtained a last day cancel (1953?) from the Nicodemus post office at one of their sanctioned stamp shows in Omaha. Through such contacts we may also find financial underwriters.[6]

Development and implementation of the above ideas requires a strong commitment from the community, but because of the Internet, the extended community of descendents, along with current residents, may be able to develop this capability.

[6] Comments on the 95% draft Cultural Landscape Report provided by Edgar Hicks, Omaha, Nebraska, compiled by the National Park Service, March 25, 2002.

A. approach routes to Township—work with landowners to preserve the rural character of road corridors and viewsheds leading to the Township to provide the visitor with a lasting and authentic impression.

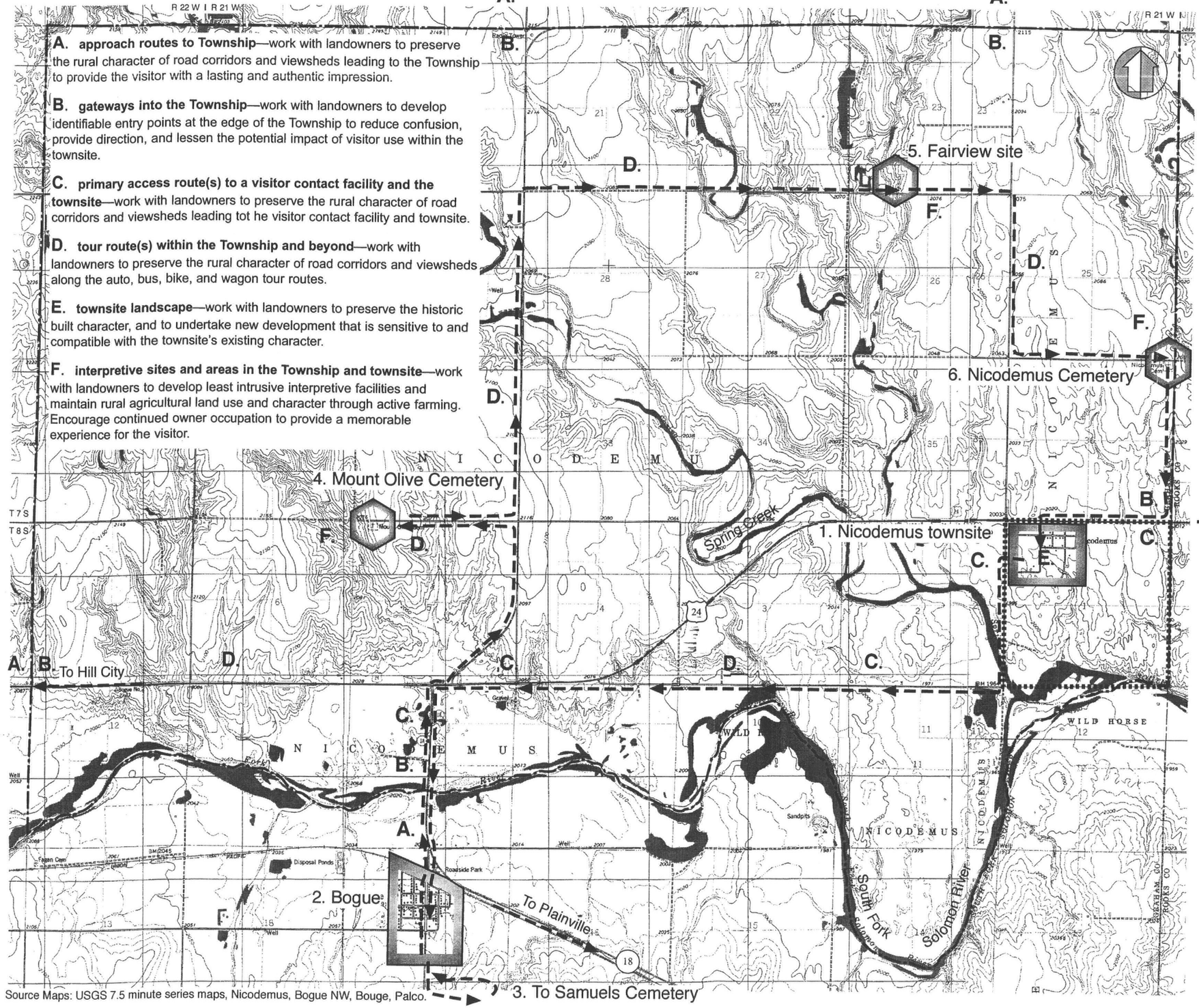
B. gateways into the Township—work with landowners to develop identifiable entry points at the edge of the Township to reduce confusion, provide direction, and lessen the potential impact of visitor use within the townsite.

C. primary access route(s) to a visitor contact facility and the townsite—work with landowners to preserve the rural character of road corridors and viewsheds leading tot he visitor contact facility and townsite.

D. tour route(s) within the Township and beyond—work with landowners to preserve the rural character of road corridors and viewsheds along the auto, bus, bike, and wagon tour routes.

E. townsite landscape—work with landowners to preserve the historic built character, and to undertake new development that is sensitive to and compatible with the townsite's existing character.

F. interpretive sites and areas in the Township and townsite—work with landowners to develop least intrusive interpretive facilities and maintain rural agricultural land use and character through active farming. Encourage continued owner occupation to provide a memorable experience for the visitor.



Source Maps: USGS 7.5 minute series maps, Nicodemus, Bogue NW, Bouge, Palco.

Legend

- Township boundary
- Section 1 boundary
- improved roads
- local unimproved road
- auto tour route
- tree cover
- points of interest
- A. resouce stewardship/ visitor access recommendations

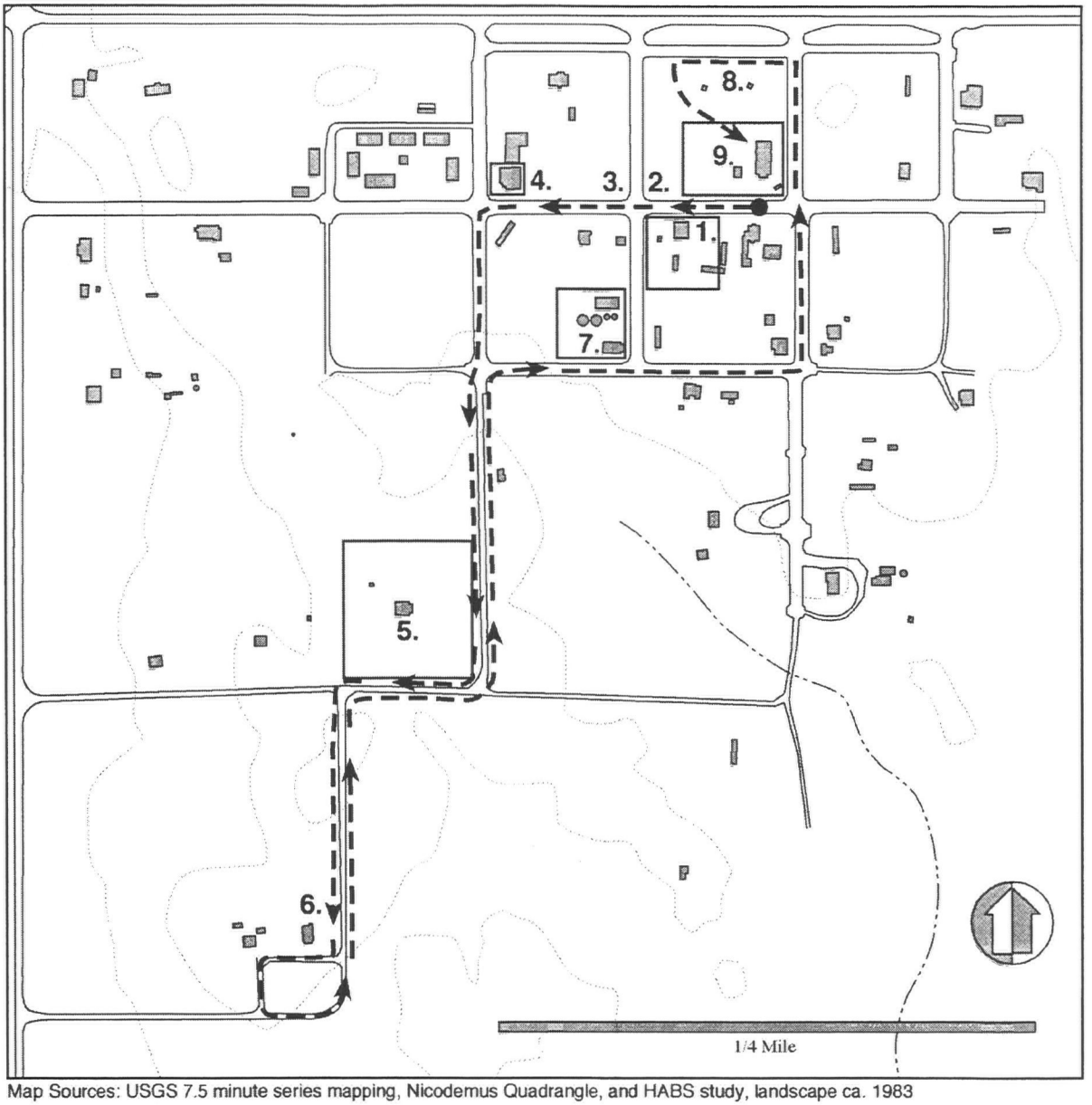
One Mile

Contour Interval = 10 ft

Nicodemus National Historic Site
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NICODEMUS, KANSAS
TOWNSHIP AUTO TOUR ROUTE MAP, RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND VISITOR ACCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 139.
Township auto tour route, associated resource stewardship and visitor access recommendations.



Map Sources: USGS 7.5 minute series mapping, Nicodemus Quadrangle, and HABS study, landscape ca. 1983

Legend

1. Fletcher-Switzer residence
2. Masonic Hall monument
3. Historic town center
4. First Baptist Church
5. District No. 1 Schoolhouse
6. Nicodemus Historical Society
7. African Methodist Episcopal Church
8. Roadside Park historical markers
9. Township Hall

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Townsite Walking and Wagon Tour Route

Figure 140.
Townsite walking and wagon tour route.

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND VISITOR ACCESS AND INTERPRETATION

(see figure 139. Township auto tour, associated resource stewardship and visitor access)

Encouraging visitors to stop at sites within the Township suggests the need to protect the setting of areas important to interpretation. Access routes and tour routes are important elements of the interpretive experience, as are viewsheds. Along any proposed tour route, efforts to protect the landscape and viewsheds of the Township should be increased. Protecting these routes should address everything from the foreground view of the edge of the road to distant views. For example, preservation of critical viewsheds might involve the sensitive siting of communications towers or working with property owners to minimize the visual impact of new construction and improvements.

Planning for tourism activities should also provide appropriate infrastructure for the comfort, safety, and enjoyment of the visitor as well as the resident. For example, a visitor contact station providing comfort stations, wayfinding information, and an introduction to the town and Township may be an appropriate addition to the experience. However, it is important that the location and setting for new infrastructure, such as a visitor contact station, not compromise existing historic building fabric, landscape features, views and vistas, particularly within the NHS.

Priorities for Landscape Stewardship to Support Interpretation

The specific areas to be considered when planning for the visitor experience include:

- **approach routes to the Township**—work with landowners to preserve the rural character of road corridors and viewsheds leading to the Township to provide the visitor with a lasting and authentic impression.

- **gateways to the Township**—work with landowners to develop identifiable entry points at the edge of the Township to reduce confusion, provide direction, and lessen the potential impact of visitor use within the town;

- **primary access route(s) to a visitor center and the townsite**—work with landowners to preserve the rural character of road corridors and viewsheds leading to the visitor center and townsite;

- **tour route(s) within the Township and beyond**—work with landowners to preserve the rural character of road corridors and viewsheds along the auto, bus, bike, and wagon routes;

- **townsite landscape**—work with landowners to preserve the historic built character combined with sensitive and compatible new development; and

- **interpretive sites and areas in the Township and townsite**—work with landowners to develop the least intrusive interpretive facilities and ensure maintenance of agricultural land use through active farming to encourage continued resident occupation and ownership and provide a memorable interpretive experience for the visitor.

Approach Routes

Predominant routes of travel that will likely by utilized by non-resident visitors to Nicodemus include:

- **US Highway 24** from the east, connections to Stockton and Osborne, from the west, connections to Hill City and Hoxie, and Interstate 70 via US 283;

- **from Damar via county paved road** north four miles to Highway 24 and then west to the townsite; and

- **State Route 18** from Bogue to the west and points southeast, including Damar, connecting to Hays from Interstate 70 via US 183.

Along these approach routes, it will be important for landowners to understand the value of preserving the rural and agricultural character of the landscape on either side of these road corridors, particularly within the roadway viewshed. Intrusive changes in character should be avoided, and the landscape should remain as scenic and rural in character as possible. Prominent and large signs, subdivision development, commercial and industrial uses, roadway maintenance and new access roads, and landscaping, including such character-defining elements as existing fences, roadway margin treatments, and trees, should be considered in moderating and guiding change.

Gateways

Potential gateways to Nicodemus likely include the towns of:

- Bogue,
- Damar, and
- Hill City,

as well as the approximate limits of the larger community of Nicodemus—Township boundaries along major road corridors:

- US Highway 24 at the Rooks County line;
- State Route 18 north of Bogue at the South Fork Solomon River; and
- US Highway 24 at the western margin of the Township to the east of Hill City.

At these gateways, it will be important to work with landowners to develop identifiable entry points. At the outer limits of the community, modest signs should define the site and allow visitors to become aware that they have arrived at Nicodemus. Such "staking out" of the community would promote a more intense effort to maintain the rural character of the area within the boundaries. Equally important is the landscape setting of the gateways; they should both reflect the rural and agricultural character of the community, and suggest its historical interest to visitors.

Visitor Contact/Orientation Facility

Visitors to Nicodemus should be provided with a visitor contact facility that welcomes, introduces, and orients visitors to Nicodemus. This facility should be located outside of the townsite due to the likely disruption it would cause the physical character of its immediate surroundings. Options that could be considered for locating a visitor orientation facility beyond the viewshed of the townsite along one of the primary approach routes of

- US Highway 24, or
- State Route 18.

The towns of Bogue and Hill City are somewhat remote to be considered viable options for a Nicodemus visitor center.

Depending on visitation levels at any period of the year, and given the imperative that the impacts of visitors on the townsite must be mitigated, consideration should be given to exploring alternative modes of transportation from a visitor facility to the townsite and tour routes through the Township. When the threshold is reached for auto access to limited parking facilities at the townsite, it may be desirable to provide shuttle van or bus services to the townsite and bus tours of the Township. Visitors could be offered alternatives of accessing only the townsite by shuttle; accessing only the Township tour by shuttle; or accessing the townsite and Township tours via shuttle. Further study is required to determine the appropriate threshold for car access within the townsite and the feasibility of shuttle services when car access is limited.

Primary Access to the Townsite and the Township

A primary route of travel should be identified between the visitor contact facility and the townsite. Along this route, it will be important for landowners to understand the value of preserving the rural and agricultural character of the road corridor and associated viewsheds. Landowners and entities involved in planning for Nicodemus's future should pursue creative and voluntary ways to protect corridors and viewsheds. This includes design issues, and may go beyond design to include such actions as working to maintain agriculture as a viable industry.

Access Within the Townsite

Landowners within the townsite should be encouraged to preserve the historic built character of Nicodemus and undertake compatible new development. Many of the features within the townsite are character-defining, and new development can enhance or detract from the character that helps to convey the significance of the community.

IMPACT ISSUES

Increases in visitation levels will require measures to ensure that the desired quality of life of residents is maintained. To minimize pollution, noise, and traffic congestion, townsite access should be limited to a small number of autos. In addition, shuttle and tour bus access should be restricted with consideration to limiting their access to the fringes of the townsite. In any case, primary visitor parking should be located with a visitor facility outside of the townsite. As the number of buses increase, particularly during special events, consideration should be given to buses unloading visitors and then parking at an off-site staging area. This scenario would require the development of a visitor drop-off and pick-up facility that would include restrooms and shelter at a minimum.

Wayfinding, orientation, and excellent levels of communication will be required to mitigate visitor access to the public streets of the townsite. Clearly, the physical proximity of a visitor contact facility to the townsite could result in visitor access-related problems and require that a transportation analysis must be a component of any visitor center study. The community, including landowners, and local and regional government must be part of any transportation study. The community must be presented with information on potential near-term and long-range impacts of private landowner plans as well as any public visitor facility and access-related plans.

Consideration of the impacts of increased traffic on the condition of roads and road-related infrastructure and future increased maintenance requirements is critical. Increased traffic on unpaved roads will likely increase dust pollution, which must be mitigated if levels are beyond what the community can tolerate.

As visitation increases consideration must be given to potential conflicts between pedestrians, vehicles, cyclists, and horse-drawn wagons. A transportation planning component of future initiatives will need to address these potential conflicts. This is very important given that walking tours may be the predominant method of access in the townsite and residents and others will continue to access their townsite while visitors are present.

Visitor Services and Accommodations

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE SERVICES

When The Nicodemus Group, the Historical Society or the Nicodemus Livery Company schedule tours, these organizations provide meals, which are usually eaten outdoors in the Roadside Park or inside the Township Hall during inclement weather. During hunting season and at various other times, the Nicodemus Buffalo Soldiers Association or other private individuals host public meals. The Priscilla Art Club building next to the Township Hall and the Nicodemus Villa sometimes serve as meal facilities. Lodging, however, is not available within the townsite or the Township. The closest available lodging is located in Hill City, Stockton, and Hays. The closest automobile and other travel-related services are in Hill City and Hays.

NEW SERVICES

The provision of facilities for visitor orientation, restrooms, and food services within the townsite will likely be necessary to support visitation. Otherwise, orientation and public restroom facilities should also be available, as now, within a very limited visitor contact station. At least until the community can provide such services, snack and drink vending machines should be provided within a visitor contact facility to support visitors within this remote region. If new tourism-related businesses are developed in or near the townsite, they would also likely include restrooms and food for customer and visitor use. The establishment of restaurant and food-related retail businesses by the community could provide a higher level of food service, and should be encouraged. The establishment of lodgings, provided through a bed and breakfast or inn within or near the townsite, would be consistent with heritage tourism development. The establishment of restaurants and inns and bed and breakfasts by local residents at former and current farmsteads would also be appropriate types of visitor services development. However, larger scale, chain-type motels and gas stations, mini-marts, and other similar facilities should be discouraged from developing businesses within the community of Nicodemus.

NICODEMUS TOWNSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS

Nicodemus Township has been the site of an agricultural economy and rural way of life for generations, and has the ability to convey many stories. Possible interpretive themes embedded in the Township landscape include the importance of agriculture to the Nicodemus community; significant connections to related communities, such as Bogue and Stockton; the importance of religion and religious rituals; and the human relationship to nature in the Great Plains region. These themes are evident in

many physical aspects of the landscape remaining today, such as the existing farms with crops and pastures for domestic animals, the roads leading to nearby communities, the Mount Olive and Nicodemus Cemeteries, the windbreaks, the farmsteads, and the long views across the high plains. The complex nature of changing agricultural practices, improvements in transportation systems (such as repaving or resurfacing roads), and the enlargement of farm clusters are possible natural evolutions in the landscape over time that may not detract from the integrity of the landscape.

Tools for Preserving Regional Rural Character

Most critical to preserving the overall rural agricultural character that is a primary means for communicating the significance and interpreting the community of Nicodemus is the survival of crop farms and ranches. Though the scope of this report does not include an analysis of the current trends and conditions associated with agricultural enterprises, it does outline the important state and federal laws and programs, and the non-regulatory rural conservation tools available to landowners and local farmers to preserve rural character and agricultural land uses. These laws and programs, and some conservation-related programs that should be considered as part of a coordinated effort to preserve the larger landscape of the Nicodemus community, are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

STATE LAWS, PROGRAMS, AND ASSISTANCE

The major state-enabled laws and programs that have and can be used to preserve rural character are listed below.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Every state in the nation has a law pertaining to conservation easements. The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws adopted the Uniform Conservation Easement Act in 1981. The Act was designed to serve as a model for state legislation and allows qualified public agencies and private conservation organizations to accept, acquire, and hold less-than-fee-simple interest in land for the purposes of conservation and preservation.

PURCHASE OF AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAMS

These programs pay farmers to protect their land from development. Landowners sell agricultural conservation easements to a government agency or private conservation organization. The agency or organization typically pays the landowner the difference between the value of the land for agriculture and the value of the land for its "highest and best use," which generally is associated with residential or commercial development. The easement value is most often determined by professional appraisal, but may also be established through the use of a numerical scoring system, which evaluates the suitability of a piece of property for agriculture.

RIGHT-TO-FARM LAWS

These laws represent a state policy assertion that commercial agriculture is an important activity. They are designed to protect farmers from nuisance laws. The statutes also help support the economic viability of farming by discouraging neighbors from filing lawsuits against agricultural operations.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF AND DIFFERENTIAL ASSESSMENT LAWS

These laws direct local governments to assess agricultural land at its value for farming instead of its full fair market value, which is generally higher. Differential assessment laws are enacted by states and implemented at the local level. With a few exceptions, the cost is borne at the local level.

Differential assessment is also known as current use assessment, current use valuation, farm use valuation, use assessment and use value assessment. Differential assessment programs help to ensure the economic viability of agriculture.

Since high taxes reduce profits, and lack of profitability is a major motivation for farmers to sell land for development, differential assessment laws also protect the land base. These laws help correct inequities in the property tax system. Owners of farmland demand fewer local public services than residential landowners, but pay a disproportionately high share of property taxes. Differential assessment helps bring farmers' property taxes in line with what it actually costs local governments to provide services to the landowners.

Recommended Programs for Preserving Rural Landscape Character

- ***ESTABLISH A CONSERVATION EASEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WHERE PROPERTIES ARE PROTECTED THROUGH THE OUTRIGHT DONATION OF EASEMENTS ON PRIVATELY OWNED PROPERTIES.***

Potential holders of such easements should be identified, and a program established if desired by those identified. The program can include an escrow plan or other instrument to demonstrate good faith and a commitment to resource protection in and around the townsite. Outright donations can be accepted as part of this program, as can restricted development rights.

The conservation easement is a useful, and flexible instrument controlling land development. A conservation easement takes into consideration the needs of the property, the desires of the owner, and the mission of the receiving organization. A conservation easement is a legal agreement that property owners enter into to restrict the type and amount of development that may take place on their properties. While the owners may give up some development rights, they retain the right to sell, transfer, bequeath or donate their land. Conservation easements are binding to the current owner as well as all subsequent owners.

A landowner may sell or donate a conservation easement. A donation to a qualified conservation organization may entitle the owner to a federal income tax deduction in the amount of the easement. In some cases, property owners may prefer monetary compensation, rather than a tax deduction. The same valuation method may be used to set a value for purchasing an easement.

- ***PURCHASE OF KEY PROPERTIES POSSESSING IMPORTANT CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO VIEWS AND VISTAS THAT ARE THREATENED.***

Sources of public and private funds for purchase (on a willing seller, willing buyer basis) may be available through existing state and federal programs, as well as private sources. Purchase of key or threatened properties should occur through a community-based private non-profit entity.

Recommendations for Township Landscape Characteristics, Features, and Systems

(see figure 141. Township interpretive sites and resources.)

Following are recommendations regarding the stewardship and preservation of those landscape resources within Nicodemus Township that support interpretation and serve as the appropriate rural agricultural setting for the Nicodemus townsite.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

- river and terrace system of the South Fork Solomon River corridor and its tributaries;
- water course and riparian corridor system of Spring Creek and its tributaries;
- broad plateaus and system of gently rolling terrain of ridges and knolls and narrow valleys;
- wetland areas and systems associated with drainage, stream, and river corridors:
  These systems are important for communicating the significance of Nicodemus; every effort should be made at the regional level to ensure that the characteristics of this system survive to support interpretation.
- rock outcroppings:
  these features may be important for communicating the story of Nicodemus; efforts should be made at the site level to preserve these features as they may relate to specific interpretive programs.

Responses to Natural Features and Systems

- drinking-water wells;
- farming operations, terracing:
  these features are important to communicating the story of Nicodemus; efforts should be made at the regional and site level to preserve these features as they may relate to specific interpretive programs.
- channelized drainageways and agricultural-drainage ditch systems;

- farming operations, pasture on slopes and within drainageways;

- farming operations, crops located on more level and gently sloped lands:
these features may be important to communicating the story of Nicodemus; efforts should be made at the site level to preserve these features as they may relate to specific interpretive programs.

- windbreak plantings associated with house and farm complexes;

- siting of farm complexes within woodlots;

- windmills, water tanks, agricultural irrigation systems;

- farm ponds and lakes, tanks (small ponds for watering livestock);

- in-ground feed storage;

- dump sites:
These features could support interpretation of agriculture and farm life.

- road bridge and low-water bridge crossings of waterways and drainages;

- road-related drainage systems including ditches, swales, and culverts:
Although these features may not be critical to communicating the story of Nicodemus, consideration should be given to interpreting the relationship between road related features surviving from earlier periods and the development of public roadway improvements.

- oil wells and sand and gravel pit mines:
Although these features may not be critical to communicating the story of Nicodemus, consideration should be given to interpreting the relationship between these features and other non-agricultural aspects of the Nicodemus landscape.

- designated hunting lands:
Although these areas are not critical to communicating the significance of Nicodemus, they may support the interpretation of resource management and conservation, including hunting, within the region.

Patterns of Spatial Organization

- broad expanses of agricultural fields on upland plateaus and ridge systems;

- township/range/system evident in orthogonal road alignments, field patterns, fencelines, and hedge rows;

- farm clusters with associated windbreak and tree cluster within open agricultural lands;

- narrow to wide wooded riparian corridors;

- farm clusters within woodlots or groves:
These systems and subsystems are important to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; every effort should be made at the regional level to ensure that the characteristics of these system survive to support interpretation.

- spaces and corridors created by abutting crops of differing heights:
These characteristics may be important to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; every effort should be made at the regional level to ensure that the characteristics of this system survive to support interpretation.

Vegetation

- crop fields;

- grass fields and pastureland;

- riparian vegetation systems including tree cover along drainage, stream, and river corridors:
these systems are very important to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; every effort should be made at the regional level to ensure that the characteristics of these system survive to support interpretation.

- orchards:
these features are important to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; efforts should be made at the regional level to ensure that the characteristics of this system survive to support interpretation.

- hedgerows;

- windbreaks;

- ornamental plantings associated with house sites and towns:
  these systems may be important to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; efforts should be made at the regional level to ensure that the characteristics of this system survive to support interpretation.

Land Uses and Infrastructure

- cemetery—Mount Olive, Nicodemus, and private cemeteries;
- agricultural—cropland;
- agricultural—pastureland:
  continuity of these land uses is critical to communicating the significance of Nicodemus.
- agricultural—orchard;
- agricultural—fallow fields;
- recreational—hunting, sports or ballfields, swimming holes;
- agricultural—farm and livestock support facilities:
  continuity of this land use and the functions associated with these systems is important to communicating the significance of Nicodemus.
- utility—electrical, telephone, and cable TV lines and corridors;
- agricultural—irrigation systems;
- industrial—sand and gravel pit mines, oil wells and associated support facilities, dumps:
  the survival of the land use and landscape characteristics associated with these systems is not essential to communicating the significance of Nicodemus.

Circulation

- unimproved roads; graded and drained roads;
- gravel or crushed stone/shale road, graded and drained:
  these roads are critical to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; efforts should be made at the regional level to ensure that the characteristics of this system survive to support interpretation.
- access drives and roads to residences and farm complexes and facilities:
  many of these drives/roads are critical to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; efforts should be made at the site level to ensure that the characteristics of this system survive to support interpretation.
- remnant road grades and paved segments associated with western portion US Highway 24:
  these abandoned road sections may support interpretation of the earlier roadway and infrastructure development in the region.
- vehicle tracks and access routes within agricultural lands;
- trails and paths:
  some of these systems may support interpretation of agriculture and land use history.
- US Highway 24, graded and asphalt paved:
  though portions of this highway follow roads that were present during late nineteenth century, the surface materials, width, and some horizontal alignments reflect mid- to late twentieth century road design; efforts should be undertaken to ensure that this road is not developed beyond a two-lane highway if possible.

Buildings and Structures, Clusters

- Nicodemus townscape of dwellings and related structures;
- Mount Olive School site:
  these sites are critical to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; every effort should be made to ensure that their landscape characteristics are protected to support interpretation.
- abandoned farm complexes and ruins;
- site of missing farm complexes and other buildings and structures;
- farm complexes, including residences and agricultural outbuildings and farm and livestock facilities;

- windmills, remote silos and livestock and agricultural storage facilities:
  some of these sites may be very important to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; every effort should be made to ensure that identified important sites are preserved to support interpretation.

- municipal water tower;

- oil wells and associated support facilities;

- modern commercial buildings:
  though these features are not critical to communicating the significance of Nicodemus, they may support interpretation of land use history.

- radio tower:

- large-scale above-ground irrigation systems:
  these features are not critical to interpretation.

Small-scale Features and Systems

- cemetery head- and footstones and other cemetery features:
  these features are critical to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; every effort should be made to ensure the survival of these features;

- decorative residential yard features:
  these features may be important to communicating the significance of Nicodemus; efforts should be made at the site level to ensure that these features survive to support interpretation

- barbed-wire fencing;

- metal gates;

- cattle guards;

- livestock- and other agriculturally-oriented features and systems;

- irrigation equipment and systems:
  although these features may not be critical to communicating the story of Nicodemus, consideration should be paid to investigating their interpretive potential within the context of Township agricultural practices.

- birdhouses and boxes:

- mailboxes:
  although these features may not be critical to communicating the story of Nicodemus, consideration should be given to the relationship of these features and interpretation of non-agricultural aspects of the Nicodemus landscape.

- directional, informational, and regulatory signs and sign systems:
  although these features and systems are not critical to communicating the significance of Nicodemus, some signs and other environmental graphics may survive from earlier periods or may represent special aspects of the community that could support interpretation.

Cultural Traditions

- Emancipation/Homecoming Celebration in Nicodemus, and other festival and celebrations;

- farming practices and operations including crop selection and irrigation methods:
  continuity of these celebrations an festivals, and farming and agricultural practices endemic to the Nicodemus community are very important for communicating the significance of Nicodemus.

- grave "Decoration Day" and picnics associated with Mount Olive and Nicodemus Cemeteries and the Nicodemus townsite;

- baptisms in Spring Creek and South Fork Solomon River:
  although these practices may not continue, consideration should be paid to interpreting them.

township/range/section system

hard-packed earth/shale roads following section lines (typ.)

farmstead (typ.), including vegetable gardens, wells, outbuildings, windmills

beef cattle production, local ownership, pasture over less suitable land

broad plateaus, rolling terrain of High Plains

former farmstead, site may survive from early settlement (typ.)

hunting (typ.)

Spring Creek, including stream corridor, riparian plant community, and terraced landform, former site for baptisms

Fairview community site

agricultural land use, dry-land farming practices, wheat and corn primary crops grown over prime agricultural land, local ownership, field patterns reflect grid

former Stockton Trail

Nicodemus Cemetery, headstones, remnant prairie vegetation

former primary route to Hill City

Nicodemus Township

Mount Olive Cemetery, headstones, community site, remnant prairie vegetation

two springs

Nicodemus townsite

oil wells, rigs

orchard

chalky bluffs, rock outcroppings (typ.)

Scruggs's Grove/former Homecoming site

South Fork Solomon River, including river corridor, riparian plant community, and terraced landform, former site for baptisms

limestone quarry sites, northern banks of river (typ.)

Source Maps: USGS 7.5 minute series maps, Nicodemus, Bogue NW, Bouge, Palco.

Legend

- Township Boundary
- Section 1 Boundary
- Improved Roads
- Local Unimproved Roads
- Tree Cover

One Mile

Contour Interval = 10 ft

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Cultural Landscape Report

NICODEMUS, KANSAS
TOWNSHIP INTERPRETIVE SITES AND RESOURCES

Figure 141.
Township intepretive sites and resources.

NICODEMUS TOWNSITE RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Nicodemus townsite is a National Historic Landmark (NHL) with various historic buildings and landscape features and systems that convey aspects of the site's development over time. Designation as an NHL provides no direct limitations on the use, maintenance, or character of buildings and the landscape, although, according to Section 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, federal agencies are directed to ensure that adequate measures are taken to minimize harm to NHLs which may be directly and adversely affected by their undertakings. National Historic Landmark status can also be revoked if the integrity of the site is sufficiently diminished.

In support of the perpetuation of Nicodemus's character, particularly the resources surviving from and associated with the early settlement period, this section provides near-term guidance to the NPS and the Nicodemus community for evaluating and managing change arising from neglect, removal, alteration, and rehabilitation of physical resources, and new development. These guidelines are not intended to affect the actions of current owners of existing properties; rather they are conceived as a crucial first step that the community should take in anticipation of developing their own mechanisms for guiding change.

Nicodemus must remain steadfast in its efforts to ensure that any future development is carefully guided. As many communities around the country can attest, it is all too easy to lose the history, community, and sense of place to isolated individual commercial developments that one by one add up to major change, even if the erosion is not always apparent in any one case. A tenuous balance is likely to exist between the conflicting goals of increased economic opportunity and preservation and perpetuation of this historic community. For these reasons, it is critical that the community of Nicodemus, in partnership with the NPS, develop a process for guiding and managing change, supported by the community as a whole, including property owners, business owners, local officials, local heritage organizations, and other stakeholder groups.

To sustain the integrity of the historic community, new development should be monitored by a community-based non-profit entity that is charged with evaluating proposals for development to ensure that the appearance and scale of new features complement the character of the townsite. The community's procedures for allowing new development should be carefully reviewed and adjusted in light of expectations that additional tourism will generate welcomed financial opportunities. The following design guidelines make specific recommendations for such new development.

Interim Guidelines for Evaluating Landscape Change in the National Historic Landmark District

The following interim guidelines have been developed to assist the NPS and the community in evaluating proposed changes within the townsite. The guidelines are also intended to support the establishment of development review mechanisms by the community in collaboration with the NPS.

The establishment of guidelines for evaluating landscape change is somewhat problematic given that nothing is currently known about changes that are likely to occur. The GMP process, for example, has not yet identified the range of alternatives for NPS management of the NHS. The other NPS-generated study that will influence change—an interpretation plan—has also not yet been prepared. Proposals for change may also be generated at the municipal level or by private property owners.

LAND USE

Every effort should be made to ensure that the townsite continues to support residential functions, uses, and activities. In addition, it is important that the Township government and community organizations and institutions continue to occupy facilities within the townsite. Equally important is the continued presence of churches and church-related activities and the activities associated with community events such as Homecoming. Historically the townsite supported commercial ventures; re-establishment of such uses would be an appropriate land use. Commercial uses relating to heritage tourism would also be appropriate. Finally, land uses relating to interpretation are also appropriate, provided that they do not encroach or intrude on the character of the townsite, and the lives of its residents.

CIRCULATION

Streets

Every effort should be made to retain and maintain all extant streets and roads, if feasible and practicable. When road corridor abandonment is proposed, the associated resources should be documented prior to removal. Abandonment without removal is preferable to demolition. In either case it is preferable to retain the topography indicating the alignment of the former roadway. Reconstruction of roads and streets missing from past periods for interpretive purposes is not recommended. However, reconstruction of former roads to meet functional, safety, and other townsite requirements will neither enhance nor detract from the townsite character.

The townsite includes a variety of road surfaces including asphalt with concrete curbing, hard-packed earth, and shale-surfaced. Within the limits of functional and safety considerations, it is recommended that the townsite retain the currently diverse character of the various streets and roads rather than establishing a homogeneous grid of asphalt-paved streets. The existing character of the unpaved streets without curbing could be included in townsite interpretive programs.

New roads and streets should be constructed only as required to meet the functional and safety needs of the community, and, when constructed, should follow the townsite's established grid of platted blocks and public streets and alleys. Avoid cutting through established, developed blocks. Dead-end and incomplete streets and alleys will neither enhance nor detract from the character of the townsite or its interpretation.

Parking

The existing methods and means available to residents and the community—internal informal parking areas, parking on the shoulders of streets and roads, and curbside parallel parking on paved streets—should continue to suffice for community use. With the addition of visitors, it may be necessary to establish new parking areas. In the near term, it is recommended that the development of large, paved parking areas within townsite blocks be avoided. As visitation increases, however, it may be necessary to develop an accessible and identifiable visitor parking facility within the townsite to ensure that residents are not adversely impacted.

Internal Site and Lot Drives

There are many types of vehicular circulation features used by residents for access and parking within the townsite's blocks. These driveways and informal areas used for access and parking, some paved, and others not, are typically associated with buildings or clusters of buildings. The wide variety of patterns and functional characteristics associated with these circulation types should be retained. New internal circulation should similarly capture the informal patterns and character of the existing systems.

Sidewalks, Trails and Paths

Townsite sidewalks are mostly short and narrow and paved with concrete. They typically run perpendicular to streets and provide connections to buildings. The primary exceptions to this pattern are the internal walk system of the "Villa," the short section of walk along Fourth Street at the First Baptist Church, and the occasional walk running diagonally between a driveway and a building. It is preferable to retain and maintain these patterns of walks, and to replicate them when constructing walks to new buildings.

There are a number of informal paths and trails crossing lots and open areas that are sometimes used as roads. These systems should be retained.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Demolition, Repair, Removal, and Adaptive Reuse

Every effort should be made to retain, maintain, and use existing buildings whenever possible. An important goal should be to bring townsite buildings and their associated utilities up to code. While it is preferable that existing buildings are retained and maintained, and remain in situ, when removal of a building is proposed, consideration should be given to relocating and rehabilitating the building elsewhere within the townsite instead of demolition. Though all townsite buildings have important associations with residents and descendents, older buildings tend to be more threatened and therefore should receive additional attention in terms of preservation and rehabilitation. Stewardship efforts should also focus on buildings that support interpretation.

Building Siting and Setbacks

Within the townsite, the predominant pattern of spatial organization is comprised of individual buildings or clusters of buildings aligned with the grid of the streets, lots, and blocks. Most buildings front public streets, and are sited on average between twenty and fifty feet from the edge of the pavement. Some buildings edge the road right-of-way, while others are sited partially within them. A small number of buildings and outbuildings are set back from the road, in the middle portion of a block, sometimes set within agricultural fields.

In general, new buildings constructed in the more developed northern section of the townsite should follow the predominant pattern of buildings fronting lot lines and facing public streets.

Building Height, Form, and Massing

With few exceptions, buildings are one-story structures, with rectangular ground plans and moderately sloped roofs. Most roof forms are side- or front-gabled, or hipped. New buildings should follow these patterns of design and construction. Multi-story structures with large floor plans that visually dominate and contrast with the predominate patterns of buildings should be avoided. Design of new buildings could also incorporate the patterns associated with former structures, such as the Masonic Lodge, a two story building with a commercial storefront. New buildings should be constructed within the same general blocks where commercial development occurred historically.

Building Materials, Style and Expression

Though no attempt should be made to dictate the efforts of individual property owners in establishing architectural styles for new construction or the repair or rehabilitation of existing structures, the character of the townsite, past and present, should serve as a guide for new changes and construction. The community may also elect to establish its own voluntary guidelines along these lines.

TOPOGRAPHY

New site development and the rehabilitation of existing features should respect current terrain and topographic form. Major topographic modifications involving heavy regrading should be avoided. New development should respect the character of the existing terrain.

VEGETATION

Careful consideration should be given to the preservation of existing vegetation and the introduction of new plantings. The retention of open lots and sparsely planted sites provides a link to the past character of the townsite. The interpretive potential of new plantings in depicting the evolving historic role of vegetation in the community should be considered.

NICODEMUS TOWNSITE RECOMMENDATIONS

(see figure 142. Townsite interpretive sites and resources.)

The Nicodemus townsite provides a context for the five NHS properties. The matrix of roads, paths, buildings, structures, plantings, fences, playground equipment, and signs, among other features, creates a sense of place that retains a connection to history but meets ongoing contemporary needs. The townsite, which is thickly settled in comparison with the Township, possesses a wide array of possible interpretive themes because of its concentration of resources. The townsite has been a religious, educational, social, governmental, and familial center for the larger Nicodemus community for many generations, and the physical evidence of these uses is extant today. The potential to interpret this matrix of community activities is high, and suggests that the townsite should be a focus for visitors.

In determining the preservation and stewardship approach for the townsite, it is important to understand the threshold for change within the town, and to determine what development would threaten its identity or interpretation of its history and culture. Likely the greatest threat to the physical character of the community would be the development of institutional, park-like features. New town development should occur based on the needs of the town residents. The imposition of an outside character or style on new development might alter the town scene beyond its ability to convey the interpretive themes outlined in the Draft GMP.

Recommendations for Townsite Landscape Characteristics, Features, and Systems

VEGETATION

- vegetable/kitchen gardens;
- pasture/prairie grasslands/meadows;
- crop fields:
  encourage the perpetuation of these vegetation types within the townsite.
- grass lawn:
  maintain grass lawn cover to ensure soil stabilization and to control erosion. Within Nicodemus, however, there is no precedent for highly manicured, irrigated, and highly fertilized lawns, likely due to the climate of the area and the rural nature of the town. Installation of intensively maintained lawn would therefore contrast sharply with the townsite's historic character and should be avoided.
- shade trees;
- evergreen trees;
- ornamental shrubs;
- evergreen windbreak plantings;
- hedgerows, and
- lines, rows, and double rows of trees along property boundaries:
  although evergreen and shade trees and shrubs post-date the early settlement period, the tradition of planting trees and shrubs for ornamental and environmental enhancement does not diminish the ability of the landscape to communicate the significance the townsite, and the plantings are also functionally beneficial. Increasing the number and density of plantings, however, will likely affect the historic character of the townsite and should be avoided.

RESPONSES TO NATURAL FEATURES AND SYSTEMS

- wells:
  preserve and protect all wells.
- use of shale as road surfacing material to limit dust and mud on hard-packed earth roads;
- drainage ditches along roads without curb and gutter:
  these features and systems contribute to the interpretation of landscape character and function.
- use of limestone as a building material:
  encourage the preservation of existing limestone structures; encourage the use of limestone in new construction.
- curb and gutter drainage improvements associated with paved town roads:
  these features and systems are not essential to communicating the significance of Nicodemus. Retain as required to meet functional requirements.

PATTERNS OF SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

- broad expanses of crop fields;
- town formed of gridded streets edged intermittently by buildings;
- narrow to wide riparian corridors in open areas;
- interior areas of town blocks edged by buildings, hedgerows, windbreaks, and clusters of trees: retain these essential landscape characteristics.

CIRCULATION

- streets and roads: retain these essential landscape features and systems.
- crushed stone and hard-packed earth access drives to various residences;
- paths;
- crushed stone, hard-packed earth, and asphalt parking areas, particularly associated with institutional and municipal complexes;
- concrete sidewalks:

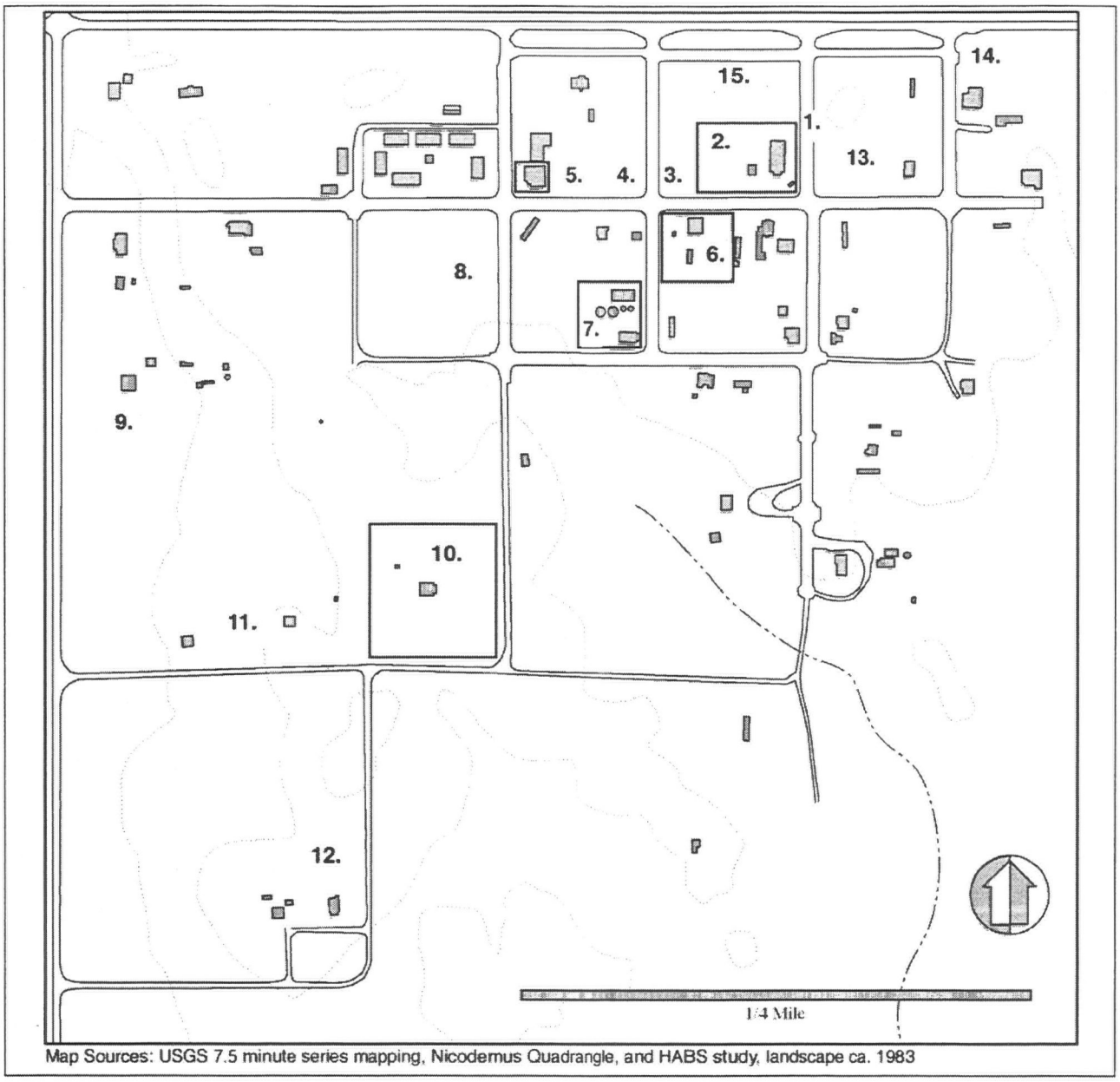
though many of these systems may post-date the early settlement period, their retention does not diminish the ability of the landscape to communicate the significance of the community.

- parking:
  an increase in the number of parking areas may result in a diminished ability of some landscape areas to communicate the significance of the townsite.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

- structures essential to communicating the significance of the townsite:
  the First Baptist Church, the St. Francis Hotel, District No. 1 Schoolhouse, the A.M.E. Church, and the Township Hall.

- structures that post-date the early settlement period:
  although most of the extant buildings and structures post-date the early settlement period, they convey the ongoing character, and in some cases, the cultural traditions of the community. Support the continuation of religious, governmental, and institutional buildings within the townsite.



Map Sources: USGS 7.5 minute series mapping, Nicodemus Quadrangle, and HABS study, landscape ca. 1983

Key to Sites

1. Township Hall, use of limestone
2. Priscilla Art Club
3. Masonic Hall site
4. site of original commercial center, town well, Sayers general store
5. First Baptist Church, use of limestone
6. Fletcher-Switzer residence, use of limestone
7. A.M.E. Church, use of limestone, agricultural outbuildings
8. crop fields within townsite
9. site of Jerry Scruggs residence
10. District No. 1 Schoolhouse, Fairview Schoolhouse site
11. Matthew dugout site
12. Nicodemus Historical Society
13. townsite grid of roads
14. former site, Ernestine's Bar-B-Q
15. Roadside Park, NHL marker, Homecoming activities

Figure 142.
Townsite interpretive sites and resources.

NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The importance to the community of the First Baptist Church, Fletcher-Switzer residence, District No. 1 Schoolhouse, A.M.E. Church, and Township Hall has been well established. The sites have varying potential for future use and interpretation; the Historic Structures Report being prepared concurrently with the CLR will influence the treatment approach for each.

Some alternatives presented in the Draft GMP outline an approach of sharing the stewardship of the five sites with the community, and working in partnership with the residents and descendants to tell the story of Nicodemus. As noted in the Draft GMP, "Under this management philosophy, the NPS would seek to balance its management responsibility for the five NHS properties with community self-determination. The goals of this approach would be to:

- minimize the impacts on community quality of life while supporting community-initiated activities and development;
- sustain the community's viability and emotional connection to Nicodemus; and
- preserve the 'pride of place' evidenced by residents' and descendants' continuing association with the place, investment in the land, recognition of their history, perseverance, and deep roots there."[7]

The treatment of a cultural landscape should preserve significant physical attributes, biotic systems, and uses when those uses contribute to historical significance. Treatment decisions should be based on a cultural landscape's historical significance over time, as well as its existing conditions and use. Treatment decisions should consider both the natural and built characteristics and features of a landscape, the dynamics inherent in natural processes and continued use, and the concerns of traditionally associated peoples.

The treatments implemented should be based on sound preservation practices to enable long-term preservation of a resource's historic features, qualities, and materials. There are three types of treatment for extant cultural landscapes: preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration.

The information included in this section is intended to address the challenges associated with balancing resource protection, operations and use, and interpretation. The landscape treatment and design guidelines and recommendations provided herein address this need by identifying a flexible approach to the protection, preservation, and maintenance of site resources, and a body of specific concepts for managing the sites.

The information included in this section is divided into three sub-sections: Recommended Landscape Treatment Approach, Treatment Guidelines, and Treatment Recommendations. The first section— Recommended Landscape Treatment Approach—outlines the alternatives recognized by the Secretary of the Interior for treating historic landscapes, and identifies the alternative that best suits the resources and management objectives of the site. The second section—Treatment Guidelines—provides guidance on how to approach the preservation of resources and landscape development. The third section—Treatment Recommendations—focuses on design alternatives and recommendations to be considered by the Nicodemus community, property owners, and NPS resource managers that will address the treatment of site resources and new development relating to private use, visitor access, site interpretation, and resource management.

The section "Use of Cultural Landscape Reports in Park Management" included in *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports, Contents, Process, and Techniques*, NPS, 1998, provides treatment guidance for studies such as this. It states:

> By definition, the GMP is the primary vehicle for determining the general treatment of all cultural resources in a park. However, many GMPs do not specifically address the treatment of cultural landscapes. As a result, treatment may be decided within the context of a Site Development Plan.

[7] National Park Service, Draft "Nicodemus General Management Plan," September 19, 2000, 32.

The most direct relationship of a CLR to the NPS planning process occurs with the preparation of a Site Development Plan (SDP). An SDP is prepared after the GMP to implement the proposed actions. The SDP addresses visitor use and interpretation of the landscape, along with compliance and public review associated with the proposed actions. It is the intermediate step between the GMP and comprehensive design.

In comparison, a CLR is prepared to guide park management decisions regarding treatment and use. A CLR focuses on preserving the significant characteristics and associated features and ensures that the treatment complies with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. Both documents may include schematic designs for treatment based on a landscape's significance, condition, and planned use.

The draft GMP currently provides some guidance on the planned use and interpretation of the five sites. Although the relevant information contained in the GMP has not been repeated in this report, it should be reviewed in conjunction with this report for background information and the specific programmatic data that supports treatment of the Nicodemus cultural landscape.

Recommended Landscape Treatment Approach

TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES

The Department of the Interior currently recognizes four treatment alternatives appropriate for historic landscapes: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. These are defined and discussed in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects* as:

Preservation maintains the existing integrity and character of a cultural landscape by arresting or retarding deterioration caused by natural forces and normal use. It includes both maintenance and stabilization. Maintenance is a systematic activity mitigating wear and deterioration of a cultural landscape by protecting its conditions. In light of the dynamic qualities of a landscape, maintenance is essential for the long-term preservation of individual features and integrity of the entire landscape. Stabilization involves re-establishing the stability of an unsafe, damaged, or deteriorated cultural landscape while maintaining its existing character.

Rehabilitation improves the utility or function of a cultural landscape, through repair or alteration, to make possible an efficient compatible use while preserving those portions or features that are important in defining its significance.

Restoration accurately depicts the form, features, and character of a cultural landscape as it appeared at a specific period or as intended by its original constructed design. It may involve the reconstruction of missing historic features, and selective removal of later features, some having cultural value in themselves.

Reconstruction entails depicting the form, features, and details of a non-surviving cultural landscape, or any part thereof, as it appeared at a specific period or as intended by its original constructed design. Reconstruction of an entire landscape is always a last-resort measure for addressing a management objective.

TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES NOT SELECTED: PRESERVATION, RESTORATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION

Preservation

Preservation would cause the landscape of the five sites to remain largely as they appear in 2002. Although this approach appears viable at first, it will not likely be consistent with the forthcoming GMP. Considerable discussion has occurred among the park, regional staff, and the CLR and HSR teams concerning the role of the community in effecting change at the five sites and the issue of ongoing use of the sites by the community and the NPS. While the types of future uses and potential for associated physical change are not currently known, it is highly likely that they will require sufficient alterations to the landscape to render a preservation approach untenable. Moreover, a preservation approach would limit the extent to which any future plans could propose

change within the sites, including the removal or addition of features and facilities to support private or public use, visitor access, and NPS administration.

Restoration

Restoration of the five sites to a specific period or date in time was also considered, but deemed an inappropriate treatment approach for Nicodemus. While there is some information available on the general historic character and appearance of the landscape of the five sites during various times in history, there is insufficient physical or documentary evidence to support restoration to any specific time period. Without sufficient documentation, it is not possible to adequately comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, particularly the restoration standard that indicates "replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically."[8] A restoration approach would also require the removal of some features and the reconstruction of missing features. These measures are similarly not feasible owing to the lack of sufficient evidence and information about missing features and the difficulty in determining the period of origin of other features. As with the preservation approach, restoration would restrict the ability of users of private sites to implement change.

Reconstruction

Reconstruction is appropriate only for a landscape that has lost most, if not all, of its integrity; and there is sufficient physical and documentary evidence to support reconstruction. This treatment approach is highly problematic given that the lack of documentary evidence for past periods of Nicodemus's history, and a specific date or period for which reconstruction would be desirable. Again, as with the preservation and restoration treatments, this approach would likely restrict the ability of private landowners to implement change on their property.

RECOMMENDED TREATMENT APPROACH

Historic landscapes are rarely static environments. The treatment recommendations and guidelines outlined in this section are intended to improve the site manager's ability to meet current and future functional, maintenance, and management needs at the site. Based on the definition of **rehabilitation** as "the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions, while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values," rehabilitation is the primary overall recommended approach to landscape management for Nicodemus. This treatment approach should be applied to all five sites that comprise the NHS, with careful attention also being paid to the preservation and protection of the resources, and their general historic character, which are identified with the 1877-1888 National Historic Landmark period of significance.

The NPS *Management Policies 2001* for cultural landscape treatment also provides guidance regarding rehabilitation:

> A cultural landscape may be rehabilitated for contemporary use if: it cannot adequately serve an appropriate use in its present condition; and Rehabilitation will retain its essential features, and will not alter its integrity and character or conflict with approved park management objectives.

Additionally, the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties* states:

> When repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, Rehabilitation is considered appropriate.

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* (36 CFR Part 67) suggest ten basic principles to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site, while allowing for reasonable change to meet new needs. They apply to historic properties of all periods, styles, types, materials, and sizes, and to both the exterior and the interior of historic buildings; and they

[8] National Park Service, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, 1996, 91.

encompass related landscape features, as well as the building's site and environment including attached, adjacent, or related new construction, as follows:

- A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

- The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

- Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

- Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

- Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

- Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

- Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

- Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

- New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Within the overall framework of rehabilitation, the preliminary analysis and evaluation sections of this CLR suggests a resource-driven approach to management that takes into consideration the site's various periods of landscape history and land use, as well as the potential for adaptive reuse. Rehabilitation will allow for the establishment of a rich and fulfilling visitor experience, and the implementation of functional site improvements to meet the needs associated with ongoing use.

TREATMENT AND THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS

As of 2002, the NHS consists of five sites, one of which is administered by the NPS. The NPS cannot implement any GMP alternatives until the public review process has been completed and the Record of Decision signed. For these reasons, the CLR includes a recommended overall treatment approach and a set of specific recommendations that anticipate the needs and objectives of both the NPS and private property owners. In advance of the completion of the GMP and plans that might identify changes in the landscape, the treatment recommendations that follow focus on maintenance, and protection, stabilization, and repair of landscape features and systems. More specific treatment recommendations will be required in the future that respond to completed planning documents and policies.

Treatment Guidelines for the National Historic Site

The guidelines outlined below are organized into a series of topics, and conform with *Director's Order 28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline*:

- general
- vegetation
- land use
- small scale features and systems
- visual quality and viewsheds
- visitor access and interpretation
- role of preservation specialists
- documentation
- new design and construction
- accessibility
- sustainability

They are intended to complement and guide the implementation of the Treatment Recommendations for each of the five sites. They are also intended to establish a general approach to site preservation and development that may be applied to all current and future planning and design initiatives and new construction and treatments.

GENERAL

- Undertake all work in compliance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, and *Director's Order 28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline*. Because of their sensitive nature, particular care should be taken to protect the archeological resources that often also constitute cultural landscape resources.
- Retain the character of the historic landscape by protecting individual elements as well as the overall landscape.
- Ensure the compatibility of proposed elements by appropriately responding to the historic character of the site.
- Base the design of all treatments and new construction on historic precedents.
- Minimize new construction at each site. Construct limited new facilities and site development as necessary to increase the functionality of the site, enhance the visitor experience, or achieve interpretive goals. Base the design of new facilities on the guidelines outlined below.
- When adding new features, carefully consider the potential impact of the development on archeological resources and the historic character of the site and townsite as a whole.
- Establish a single design identity and character for interpretive and visitor information systems.

VEGETATION

- Retain, where appropriate, existing vegetative cover.
- Undertake vegetation management strategies based on NPS principles of sustainability, as described in the 1993 *Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design*, and site management objectives.
- Remove, when necessary, existing trees and/or shrubs using a method that minimizes the potential impacts on known and potential archaeological resources. Undertake stump removal monitored by an archeologist.
- Avoid threats to existing natural areas by selecting plant species for new plantings that are not invasive, diseased, or infected with any plant pathogen.
- Undertake installation of new plants as necessary in areas of known or potential sensitive historic or archeological resources using acceptable and least-damaging planting techniques accompanied by archeological monitoring. Recommended techniques include: the minimization of ground disturbance through the installation of small plants wherever possible; the installation of plants by hand digging; the selection of planting locations that are not in conflict with desirable plants to remain; and the protection of existing plants and resources to remain.

LAND USE

- Protect significant aspects of the historic landscape by preserving existing topography and natural drainage patterns to the greatest extent possible.

- Protect known and potential archeological resources by avoiding land-use activities, whether historic or contemporary, that may threaten or impair them.

- Minimize immediate and long-term damage to cultural resources by monitoring and regulating use of the landscape.

SMALL SCALE FEATURES AND SYSTEMS

- Document all fixed and movable small scale features, fixtures, site furnishings, walls, fences, pavements, and other landscape elements as soon as possible and prior to undertaking changes at each site. Work with the community and local experts to document, assess, and, if required, archive these features.

- Retain, maintain, and repair all site features and systems. Remove these features in cases where condition prohibits retaining them, or interpretive objectives require removal.

VISUAL QUALITY AND VIEWSHEDS

- Retain and maintain the existing spatial organization of each site, and views and vistas from sites and into sites.

- Consider historic vistas and views from all areas of the landscape when undertaking new development and landscape change.

VISITOR ACCESS AND INTERPRETATION

- Protect site resources by limiting, monitoring, and controlling unauthorized access to sensitive sites such as undeveloped, ethnographic, and archeological areas and features.

- Protect existing topographic features of the site by incorporating, whenever possible, existing circulation systems into routes designed to provide access. Avoid whenever possible the alteration of topography when providing accessible paths to resources. In situations where no accessible path is feasible using existing topography, locate and construct new routes to avoid as much as possible historic topographic features, particularly within areas of known and potential archeological resources. Consider providing alternative interpretive programs in lieu of topographic alterations.

- Encourage stewardship by developing interpretive programs that address layers of cultural resources and their interrelationships. It is preferable to develop interpretation plans prior to implementing landscape changes. Landscape changes should be generated by and/or compatible with interpretation plans.

- Minimize the visual and physical impacts of interpretive and visitor access facilities on cultural resources by developing the least-intrusive interpretive and visitor access physical improvements possible.

- Develop interpretation plans and programs, and undertake landscape changes that support interpretation in consultation with the community and local experts knowledgeable with each site's resources.

ROLE OF PRESERVATION SPECIALISTS

- Undertake all treatment projects and management efforts under the direction of experienced specialists, including historical landscape architects, historical architects, materials conservation specialists, archeologists, and qualified technicians and tradepersons.

- Undertake all treatments in consultation with the community and local experts knowledgeable about each site and its resources.

DOCUMENTATION

- Document, through drawings, photographs, and notes, all landscape changes and treatments. Maintain records of treatments and preserve documentation according to professional archival standards.

REPAIR AND NEW DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

- Avoid endangering known or potential archeological resources by limiting activities that may disturb the land until necessary archeological investigations have

been completed. If it is not known whether archeological resources are within an area planned for land disturbing activity, such activity should be preceded by archeological evaluations and investigations.

- Introduce features to facilitate access and interpretation in such a way as to minimize adverse impacts on the character and resources of the landscape. New construction should be limited to landscape alterations and additions necessary to provide for visitor access, interpretation, and management. The new or altered facilities should be as non-intrusive as possible while allowing for utility, accessibility, and safety.

- Limit the use of destructive techniques, such as archeological excavation, to mitigation of impacts and to providing sufficient information for research, interpretation, and management goals.

- Evaluate all proposed new uses in consultation with the community and a historical landscape architect, archeologist, and other appropriate professionals.

- Undertake sufficient study and recording of landscape features requiring modification, repair, or replacement before work is performed to protect research and interpretive values.

- Avoid landscape changes that create a false sense of historical development, including the addition of conjectural, typical, or representative features. If representative historical features are constructed, provide interpretive media and materials that clearly identify the features as such.

- Repair, rather than replace, deteriorated historic and cultural landscape features. Repair of deteriorated features should be based on archeological, documentary, or physical evidence. Replacement of historic features, if necessary, should be based on archeological, documentary, or physical evidence; the new features should match the old in design, color, texture, and, wherever possible, materials. Replaced features should be compatible with but distinguishable from original historic fabric.

- Avoid the use of chemical or physical treatments that cause damage to cultural resources and natural systems.

- Protect and preserve archeological resources in place. If such resources must be disturbed, undertake mitigation measures such as recovery, curation, and documentation.

- Design and site new additions or alterations to the landscape in such a way that they do not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the cultural landscape. Design all new additions and alterations to be a product of their time, and to be compatible with the historic resources in materials, size, scale and proportion, and massing. Differentiate new work from existing historic resources.

- Design and site new additions and alterations to the landscape in such a way that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic landscape would be unimpaired.

ACCESSIBILITY

- Approach overall planning, design, and interpretation with accessibility made a primary design factor. All features associated with accessibility should conform to the standards cited in the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS); the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG); and the Final Report of the Regulatory Negotiation Committee on Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, September 30, 1999.

- As a part of the planning and design process, recognize the potential diversity of visitors including people with emotional, physical, or mental disabilities; who do not speak English; are arriving from foreign countries and remote urban and rural locations; or are very young or elderly.

- Design and construct all facilities to be barrier free when practical.

- Integrate accessibility components fully into the design of new facilities and site improvements to allow for the use of all visitors.

- Design operational and administrative facilities to be accessible.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Institute cultural resource treatment and maintenance methods that are environmentally and culturally sensitive and sustainable over the long term.
- Minimize areas of vegetative disturbance, earth grading and compaction, and drainage pattern alteration.
- Avoid causing environmental degradation when preserving, providing access to, and interpreting cultural resources.
- Undertake site design that incorporates holistic, ecologically based strategies aimed at contributing to the repair and restoration of natural systems.
- Promote biodiversity.
- Use mitigating devices, such as retaining walls, closed drainage systems, and large areas of cut and fill, sparingly. Implement the least-intrusive activities and those involving stabilization first, and proceed subsequently to the most invasive as necessary. Limit major new interventions to areas that have previously been severely disturbed.
- Emphasize solutions that work with the existing topography as much as possible over solutions that require landform altering cut and fill, large-scale retaining walls, or the extensive use of concrete or other paving materials.
- Consider the direction of prevailing summer breezes and winter winds to help with cooling and ventilation in summer, and to shelter new facilities from harsh winter winds. Site new developments to take advantage of solar heating, if practical.
- Consider the site's ecology, including topography, soil types, vegetation, and groundwater, in order to integrate the building with its ecosystem.
- Use locally indigenous materials that are renewable, environmentally sensitive, and reflect the regional vocabulary. Consider locally produced products to construct design features.
- Take into consideration life cycle costing of materials to assess the long-term wearing capacity and maintenance costs of landscape materials. Consider materials that are non-toxic, durable, long-lived, and low maintenance.
- Explore the availability of recycled materials, and consider re-usable materials.
- Use only stable, non-hazardous materials that do not emit toxins through off-gassing or soil leaching. Avoid petroleum-based materials whenever possible.

Treatment Recommendations for the National Historic Site

The landscape treatment guidelines and recommendations included below were developed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, 1996. In addition, landscape treatment recommendations were developed to comply with the relevant policies of the NPS Management Policies 2001 for cultural resource management.

Treatment of the properties associated with the Nicodemus NHS will likely evolve as the planning and public participation process continues. Recommended short-term treatments for each site are based on a phased process that emphasizes protection, repair, and maintenance. The priorities for the treatment and maintenance work associated with each of the phases is as follows:

PRINCIPLES FOR PRESERVATION MAINTENANCE

Higher Priority

Safety
Protection and preservation of historic materials and features
Perpetuation of historic character
Support of property/site operations and current use
Use of historic methods and materials
Encouragement of lower-cost maintenance

Lower Priority

Improvement of aesthetics

Phase One: Protect and Stabilize Existing Landscape Features and Systems

Owing to the limited information on the historic character and date of origin of many extant landscape features and systems, phase one actions should include:

- Identification of the threats to resources;
- Minimization of site disturbance;
- Protection of deteriorated landscape features;
- Stabilization of threatened landscape features;
- Improvement of the condition of features;
- Monitoring of the condition of features; and
- Recording of treatment and maintenance.

Phase Two: Repair and Retain Extant Landscape Features

As new planning-level information is developed, as part of phase two undertake a program of continued maintenance including:

- Protection of existing landscape features from identified threats;
- Repair of damaged features;
- Maintenance of features in stabilized condition;
- Monitoring of the condition of features; and
- Recording of treatment and maintenance.

Phase Three: Maintain Features and Preserve Historic Landscape Character

After a Record of Decision is made regarding the GMP and other treatment-related planning-level documents and agreements are completed, as part of phase three, undertake a program of implementing and sustaining long-term stewardship of the rehabilitated and preserved landscape, such as:

- Perpetuation of landscape character as defined by this CLR, other planning and treatment-related documents, and a preservation maintenance plan;
- Retention of historic features in good condition;
- Removal and replacement of features in-kind when they begin to adversely affect character or deteriorate beyond repair;
- Monitoring of the condition of features;
- Recording of treatment and maintenance; and
- Incorporation of new features to accommodate visitors to the park as well as private economic development activities that are sensitive to existing community character.

Each of the sites is addressed below. In addition to a description of near-term treatments focusing on resource maintenance, a conceptual-level discussion of treatment associated with potential landscape change is provided for each site. The Nicodemus HSR should be consulted for additional treatment recommendations relating to the buildings themselves.

First Baptist Church

(see figure 143. First Baptist Church treatment recommendations)

The NPS should work with and support the efforts of the church congregation to rehabilitate the building and site, allowing for their continued use. Landscape changes should be limited until a well-developed site program can be developed detailing the types of uses planned for the church. Interpretation and visitor access goals and objectives should shape new interventions on the site. Consideration should be given to limiting changes to those that support visitor access for interpretive purposes, and that do not interfere with the community's use of the building and site.

CIRCULATION

- concrete sidewalk and ramp fronting Fourth Street: retain and maintain this walk; replace degraded sections including uneven and heavily spalled or cracked sections that pose trip hazards. Repair the walk by removing whole sections, match the existing

concrete materials and finish as closely as possible. Consider exposing the light aggregates by washing cement film on the surface. Remove vegetation from the walk. Vegetation poses a trip hazard and contributes to the degradation of the pavement.

- concrete stoop at building entrance:
this stoop may survive from the early twentieth century. The lower portion of the stoop has been buried by fill that was added around the building during or after the 1940s. Retain and maintain this stoop. When considering options for accessible routes to the building, retain the stoop if possible. Remove vegetation from the stoop.

- barrier-free access to building:
the topography and grades surrounding the building appear to have been altered during or after the 1940s. The majority of the area around the building has been filled and raised. Until an overall treatment plan is developed for the church, consider constructing a temporary accessible walk leading from the sidewalk fronting Fourth Street to the front entrance. Any new walk constructed in association with the church should be designed to ensure positive drainage away from the building. Alternative temporary walk concepts include:

  —procure and store a movable ramp to be used prior to implementing accessibility changes; or

  —construct, over the existing concrete walk, a temporary ramp of wood or metal, which is sloped at less than 5 percent, between the sidewalk fronting Fourth Street and the building stoop. It should be designed to allow water to drain beneath the structure. Install metal handrails, using metal bar stock that is the least intrusive in character; or

  —construct a new concrete walk that slopes to, and meets flush with, the existing concrete stoop. Fill to either side so that finish grades meet flush with the pavement and slope away from it gently. In addition, provide positive drainage away from building; or

  —retain and maintain the existing concrete walk. Construct a new, temporary, accessible wood walk and wood or metal ramp with metal hand and guardrails leading to the stoop from the intersection of walks at the corner of Fourth Street and Washington Avenue. The alignment of the new walk or ramp system should form a right angle, with the end of the ramp connecting to the south side of the existing stoop and running parallel with the west side of the building; or

  —retain and maintain the existing concrete walk. Construct a new, permanent, accessible concrete walk and wood or metal ramp with metal hand and guardrails leading to the stoop from the intersection of walks at the corner of Fourth Street and Washington Avenue. The alignment of the new walk or ramp system should form a right angle, with the end of the ramp connecting to the south side of the existing stoop and running parallel with the west side of the building.

VEGETATION

- grass lawn, closely mown:
retain and maintain grass lawn. Repair all bare soil and disturbed areas by establishing grass lawn cover. Remove vegetation at building foundation that may threaten the condition of the building.

- rose shrub at front building foundation:
retain and maintain rose shrub. If repairs to building require the removal of the shrub, propagate a cutting and replant or replace with the same species. Prune shrub away from building wall.

- hackberry tree at rear northeast corner of building:
this tree is likely a volunteer and threatens the condition of the building. Remove the tree and cut the stump below grade, repair grades and establish grass cover.

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

- historical marker at front of building:
unless this marker is important to the community or congregation, consider replacing the sign with a new wayside exhibit that would be sited at the southwest corner of the site, and in a location that does not conflict with access to the building. Visitor safety and visual impacts should be considered when designing and siting a new wayside exhibit.

- well or cistern: retain and maintain the well or cistern structure. Inspect the structure for conditions relating to safety; ensure that the structure is safe. Safety-related changes should not be visually-intrusive.

- butane/propane tank:
  this feature is not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS; retain and maintain the tank as required to ensure safety and meet functional requirements. If building mechanical systems are replaced, and the tank is no longer needed, remove the tank.

- overhead power line and pole:
  this feature is not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS; retain and maintain as necessary to support use of the building. If a new pole is required, consider setting it in the location of the removed pole.

NEW PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT

Building Changes

The church building is an essential part of any program to communicate the history and significance of the NHL and the NHS. Every effort should be made to ensure the survival of the building, including the minimization of alterations such as the removal of major portions of the building or additions to it. It is preferable to meet church user programmatic needs by altering the newer church building to the north.

Site Changes

The primary consideration when evaluating proposed changes to the site and landscape is the importance of retaining the open spatial character of the lot surrounding the building. Every effort should be made to retain, and avoid alterations that would result in a loss, of such character. Building additions, parking lots, and other permanent alterations may compromise the ability of the site to communicate its significance and importance through interpretation.

Ongoing Use

It is preferable that the building be used by the church organization. This character-defining use supports rehabilitation through stewardship, and will likely also support interpretive goals and objectives.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

An archeological assessment and inventory should be undertaken at this site to better understand its sensitivity to land disturbance. The HABS study indicates that three sanctuary structures established on the site during the nineteenth century have been demolished: a ca. 1877 dugout, ca. 1880 sod structure, and ca. 1885 stone structure. Since little detailed information is known about the character of the site during the nineteenth century, archeological investigation may be an important source of information to support treatment and interpretation. The entire site should be considered sensitive to soil disturbance.

See First Baptist Church Treatment Plan that follows.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH TREATMENT PLAN

General Recommendations

- Consider ways to rehabilitate the First Baptist Church and grounds to allow for continued use of the building and the site by the church congregation. Also consider functional, interpretive, and visitor access goals in future rehabilitation plans. New construction supporting visitor access and interpretation should be compatible and accommodate the community's use of the building and site.

- Retain the open character of the site and landscape around the building. Avoid building additions, parking lots, or other permanent alterations.

- Undertake every effort to ensure the survival of the First Baptist Church building. Avoid altering the building with additions or removing earlier additions. It is preferable to meet church user programmatic requirements by altering the adjacent building to the north. The building is critical to any program to communicate the history and significance of the NHL and the NHS.

- Include the First Baptist Church parcel in an archeological overview and assessment. Consider the site sensitive to soil disturbance until further investigations have determined otherwise.

Recommendations for Specific Features

(see figure 143. Numbered items in the following list are keyed to map.)

1) Retain and maintain the concrete walk and ramp fronting Fourth Street. Remove vegetation from the walk. Replace degraded, heavily spalled and cracked sections by removing whole sections and matching existing concrete materials and finishing as closely as possible.

2) Retain and maintain the concrete stoop. When considering options for an accessible route into the building, retain the stoop if possible. Remove vegetation from the stoop.

3) Consider constructing a temporary accessible walk leading from the sidewalk fronting Fourth Street to the front entrance. Ensure positive drainage in the design of the accessible walk.

4) Retain and maintain grassy lawn. Repair areas of bare soil. Remove vegetation from around the building foundation.

5) Retain and maintain the rose shrub at the front building foundation. If repairs to the building require the removal of the shrub, the user should be consulted regarding replacement; prune the shrub away from the building wall.

6) Remove the volunteer hackberry tree behind the church building. Cut the stump below grade. Repair grades and establish grass cover.

7) Consider replacing the existing historical marker along Third Street with a new interpretive wayside exhibit. Consider visual impacts and visitor safety in its siting.

8) Retain and maintain the propane tank as required to ensure safety and to meet functional requirements of building. Remove tank if building mechanical systems are upgraded and the tank is no longer necessary.

9) Retain and maintain overhead power lines and poles to support use of the building. Replace poles as needed in similar locations.

10) Retain and maintain the well/cistern structure. Inspect it for conditions relating to safety and repair deficiencies. Ensure that safety-related changes are not visuall

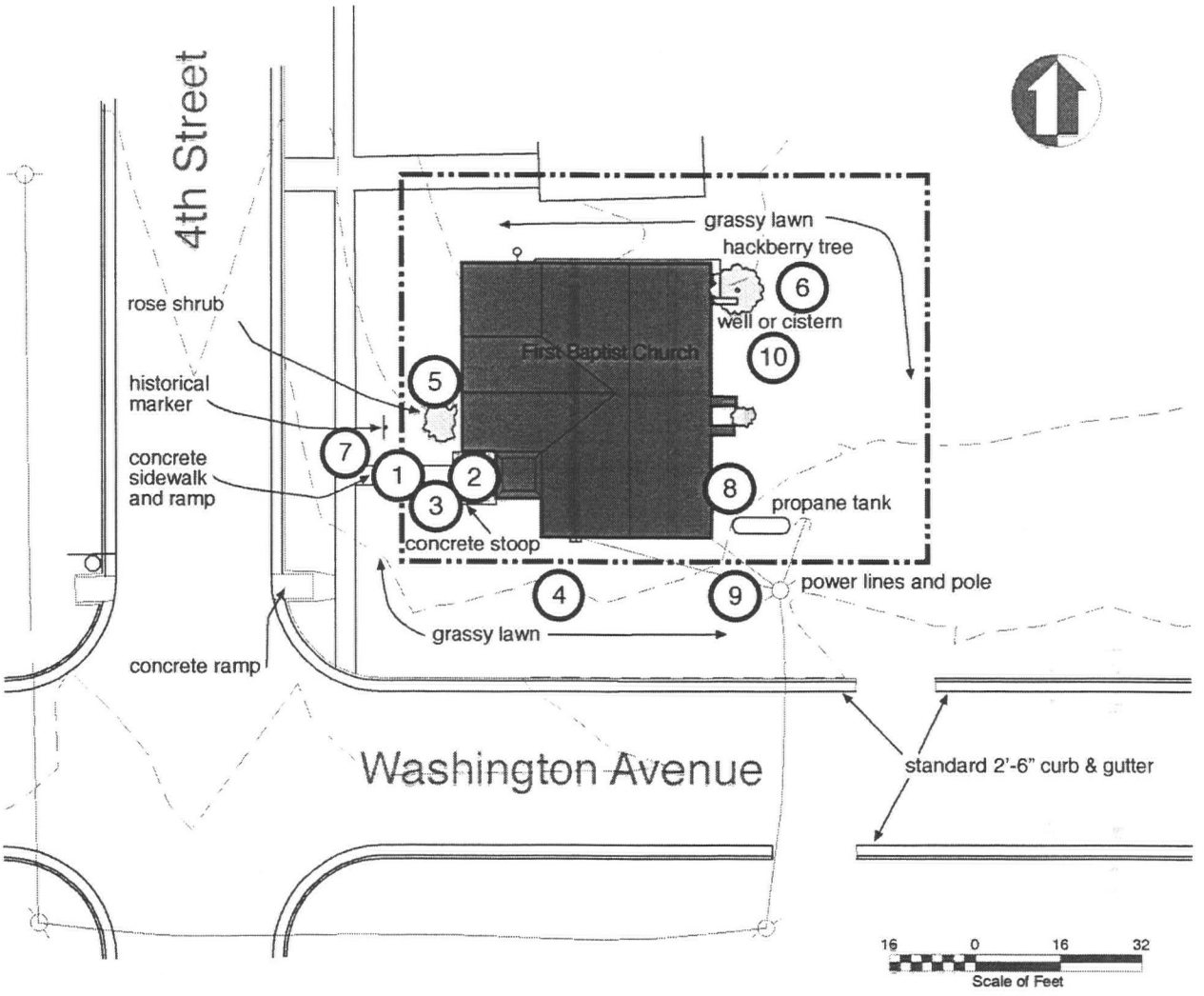


Figure 143.
First Baptist Church treatment recommendations.

Fletcher-Switzer Residence

(see figure 144. Fletcher-Switzer residence treatment recommendations)

The NPS should work with and support the efforts of the community and the property owner to rehabilitate the building and grounds to allow for continued use of the building and the site by the community. Changes to the landscape that duplicate or suggest its historic residential character should be limited until a well-developed site program can be developed that details anticipated and planned uses. In addition, functional, interpretive, and visitor access goals and objectives should shape new interventions in the site. Consideration should be given to limiting changes on the site to supporting visitor access for interpretation. New construction supporting visitor access should be minimal, and should not interfere with the community's use of the building and site.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

- mobile home:
  this structure is not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS; it is possible to interpret the site with or without the mobile home. No attempt should be made to screen the structure and its environs to support interpretation of the site.

- two small outbuildings:
  retain and maintain these buildings; undertake repairs to stabilize and preserve them. These structures could support interpretive programs.

CIRCULATION

- hard-packed earth/concrete walk and set of steps connecting Washington Avenue and the front entrance of the building:
  retain and maintain the walk and steps. Clear vegetation from the pavement and steps since vegetation poses a trip hazard and contributes to the degradation of the concrete. Replace degraded sections, including uneven and heavily spalled or cracked sections that pose trip hazards. Repair the walk by removing whole sections, and match the existing concrete materials and finishing as close as possible. Consider exposing the light aggregates by washing cement film on the surface.

- crushed stone and hard-packed earth access drive from Washington Avenue:
  retain and maintain the access drive. Remove vegetation within the limits of the drive using a systemic herbicide.

- barrier-free access to building:
  if barrier-free access is required in the near-term, consider constructing a temporary accessible walk or ramp leading from Washington Avenue to the front entrance of the residence. Over the longer term, a new temporary or permanent walk should be constructed. In the design of the walk, ensure positive drainage away from the building.

VEGETATION

- mown grass lawn:
  retain and maintain mown lawn areas, and repair all bare soil and disturbed areas by establishing grass lawn cover.

- trees;

- shrubs:
  retain and maintain all specimen trees and shrubs; remove all volunteer trees and shrubs;

- weedy growth around foundations of buildings:
  remove vegetation at building foundations.

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

- well or cistern: retain and maintain the well structure; inspect the structure for conditions relating to safety. Ensure that the structure is safe; safety-related changes should not be visually intrusive.

- butane/propane tank;

- overhead power lines and poles and street lights:
  these features are not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS; retain and maintain the propane tank as required to ensure safety and meet functional requirements. If building mechanical systems are replaced, and the tank is no longer needed, remove it. Retain and maintain the overhead power lines and poles. If new poles are required, consider setting new poles in the locations of removed poles.

- fire hydrant;

- stop sign at corner of Third Street and Washington Avenue:
  retain these features as required to ensure public safety;

- historical marker at front of building:
  unless this marker is important to the community or user, consider replacing the sign with a new wayside exhibit along Washington Avenue in a location that does not conflict with access to the building. Visitor safety and visual impacts should be considered when designing and siting a new wayside exhibit.

- miscellaneous stored and stockpiled items:
  work with local community members to inspect these items for their potential to support future interpretive programs. Remove, preserve, and store retained items; remove and dispose of all other items.

NEW PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT

Building Changes

The building and the two outbuildings are critical to any program to communicate the history and significance of the NHL and NHS, and the residential evolution of the townsite. Every effort should be undertaken to ensure the survival of the main building, particularly those portions of the building surviving from the early settlement period. The outbuildings should be retained until interpretation plans can be completed, in the event that they support these plans.

Site Changes

The primary consideration when evaluating proposed changes to the site is the importance of retaining the open spatial character of the lot areas surrounding the main building and outbuildings, the additions and obvious evolution of the buildings, the casual combination of lawn, ornamental or shade plantings, and the unpaved, informal drive, as well as small decorative features. Every effort should be made to retain the property's open character and to avoid alterations that would result in a loss of such character. Building additions, parking lots, and other permanent alterations may compromise the ability of the site to communicate its significance and importance through interpretation.

Ongoing Use

It is preferable that the site be occupied and used in an appropriate manner that would support rehabilitation through stewardship. It is also important that use of the property support interpretive goals and objectives.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

An archeological assessment and inventory should be undertaken on the site to better understand its sensitivity to land disturbance. The HABS study indicates that structures established during earlier periods have been demolished or are missing. Little detailed information is known about these structures, including two dugouts, a stone post office and Fletcher's Emporium, two garage outbuildings, and other miscellaneous site structures and features. Archeological investigation may provide important information to support treatment and interpretation. The entire site should be considered sensitive to soil disturbance.

See Fletcher-Switzer Residence Treatment Plan that follows.

FLETCHER-SWITZER RESIDENCE TREATMENT PLAN

General Recommendations

- Consider ways to rehabilitate the Fletcher-Switzer residence and grounds to allow for continued use by the community. Changes to the landscape that suggest the site's historical character should be limited until such time as a well-developed site program can be developed. Also consider functional, interpretive, and visitor access goals in future rehabilitation plans. New construction supporting visitor access and interpretation should be compatible and accommodate the community's use of the building and site.

- Retain and maintain the open spatial character of the lot, the additions and evolutions of the building, the casual combination of lawn and plantings, unpaved informal drive, small decorative features.

- Undertake every effort to ensure the survival of the residence, particularly those portions of the building surviving from the early period of development.

- Promote active use and occupation of the site in a manner that would support rehabilitation through stewardship and could also support interpretive goals and objectives developed in the future.

- Include the Fletcher-Switzer parcel in an archeological overview and assessment. Consider the site sensitive to soil disturbance until further investigations have determined otherwise.

Recommendations for Specific Features

(see figure 144.)

1) Retain and maintain the mobile home only as necessary to meet functional needs. The site can be interpreted with or without the mobile home; no attempt should be made to screen the structure and its environs to support interpretation of the site.

2) Retain, maintain, and stabilize the two small outbuildings. Consider them in the overall interpretive plan for the townsite.

3) Retain and maintain the walk and set of steps connecting Washington Avenue, the front entrance of the residence, and the access drive. Remove vegetation from them. Replace degraded, heavily spalled and cracked sections.

4) Consider methods for providing barrier-free access to the building if interpretation requires public access.

5) Retain and maintain grassy lawn. Repair areas of bare soil.

6) Retain and maintain specimen trees and shrubs; remove volunteer trees and shrubs.

7) Remove vegetation from building foundations.

8) Retain and maintain the propane tank as required to ensure safety and to meet functional requirements of building. Remove the tank if building mechanical systems are upgraded.

9) Consider replacing the existing historical marker with a new interpretive wayside exhibit. Consider visual impacts and visitor safety in its siting.

10) Retain and maintain overhead power lines and poles to support uses of the building. Replace poles in similar locations.

11) Retain and maintain the well/cistern structure. Inspect it for conditions relating to safety and repair deficiencies. Ensure that all safety-related changes are not visually intrusive.

12) Retain and maintain the traffic sign to meet functional and safety requirements.

13) Retain and maintain the fire hydrant to ensure public safety.

14) Inspect, with community, miscellaneous stored and stockpiled items and equipment for their potential to support future interpretation. Remove, preserve, and store retained items; remove and dispose of all others.

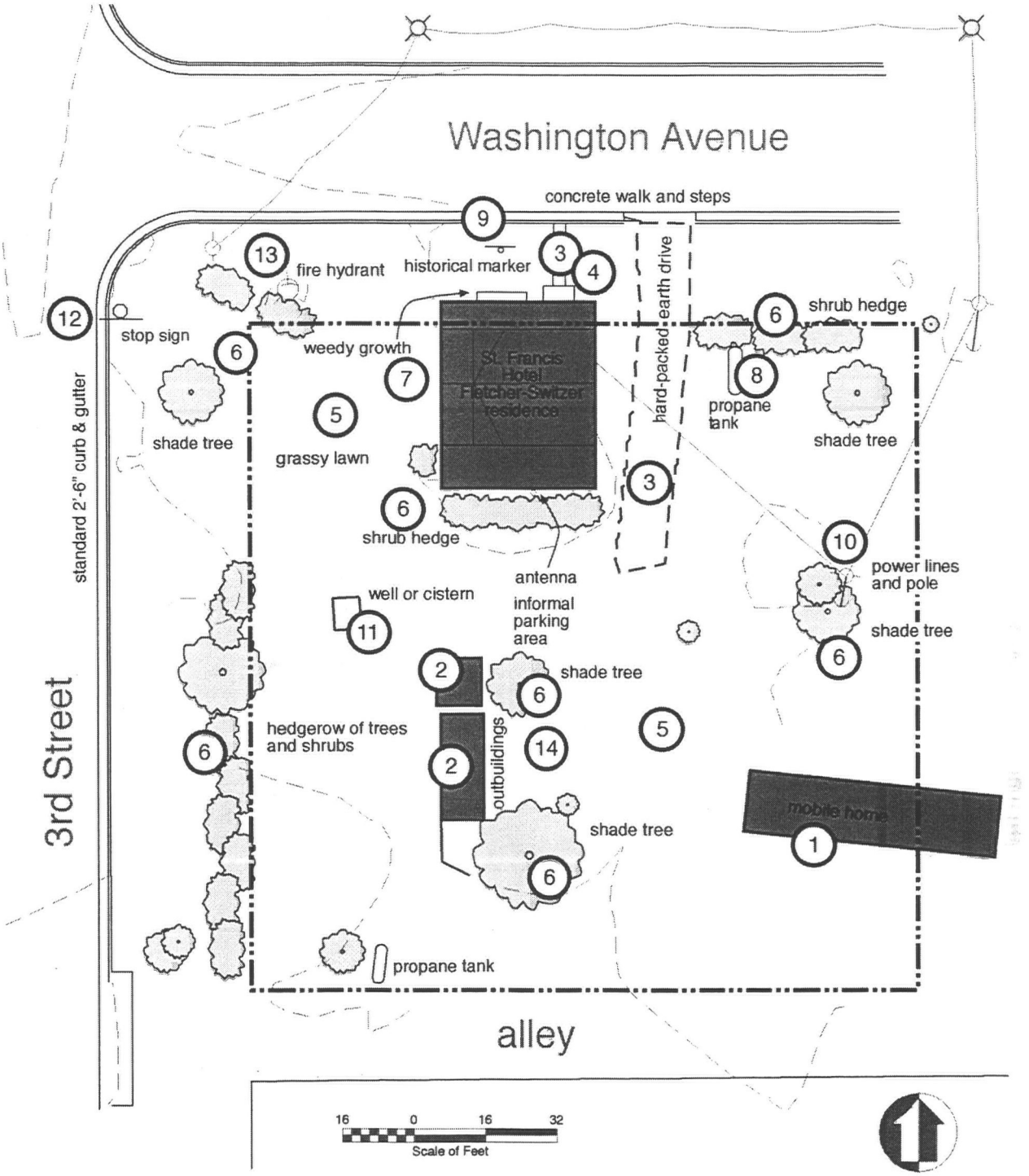


Figure 144.
Fletcher-Switzer residence treatment recommendations.

District No. 1 Schoolhouse

(see figure 145. District No. 1 Schoolhouse treatment recommendations)

The NPS should work with and support the efforts of the community and the property owner to rehabilitate the building and site to allow for continued use by the community. Changes to the landscape should be limited until a well-developed site program can be developed detailing the anticipated and planned uses. In addition, functional, interpretive, and visitor access goals and objectives should shape new interventions in the site. Consideration should be given to limiting changes to those supporting visitor access for interpretation. Any new construction supporting visitor access and interpretation should be compatible and accommodate the community's use of the building and site.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

- wood (coal) shed;

- privy ruins:
  retain and maintain these building and ruins. Undertake repairs to stabilize and preserve them. These features could support interpretation of the property as a schoolhouse.

CIRCULATION

- mown grass-surfaced vehicle track accessing front of school building:
  although this feature is not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS, retain, maintain, and continue to use this vehicle track for access since continued use will help perpetuate its character.

- parking and vehicular access:
  additional means for parking and vehicle access may be required to meet the needs of the building users, including visitors to the NHS. In the near-term, assuming low visitation levels, visitors arriving by vehicle should park along the edge of Fourth Street and access the site via the existing vehicle track. The vehicle track surface should be repaired to provide a walkable surface and the grass mown low enough to allow for pedestrian access. As visitation increases and interpretive plans are developed, consider constructing a new access into the site at the southwest corner of the lot on Madison Avenue. Install a culvert and construct a crushed stone drive and either a crushed stone or reinforced grass-surfaced parking lot. Avoid constructing an asphalt-paved parking lot.

- pedestrian access:
  pedestrians approaching the site from Fourth Street should continue to access the site from the vehicle track.

- barrier-free access to building:
  if barrier-free access is required in the near-term, consider procuring and storing a portable metal ramp for use when required; constructing an accessible walk or ramp system at the front of the building should be avoided; other barrier-free access alternatives include:

  —construct a new wood or metal ramp at the rear of the building. This concept will require constructing a new accessible entrance, including a door and landing or porch. This new entrance requires a connection, via a hard surfaced accessible path, to an accessible hard-surfaced parking area. In addition, the accessible route should connect, via an accessible, stable, hard surfaced path, to an interpretive walking tour route using Fourth Street; or

  —construct a new wood or metal ramp at the south side of the building accessing a new door on the south side of the building or connecting with the front porch. This concept will require the construction of a new accessible entrance, including a door and landing or porch. This new entrance requires a connection, via a hard surfaced accessible path, to an accessible hard-surfaced parking area. In addition, the accessible access should connect, via an accessible, stable, hard surfaced path, to an interpretive walking tour route using Fourth Street.

VEGETATION

- tall grass fields;

- grass-lined ditches along street frontages:
  retain and maintain the tall grass fields and grass-lined ditches throughout the site. Repair all bare soil and disturbed areas by establishing grass cover. Remove vegetation at the building foundation, since vegetation may threaten the condition of the building.

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

- well at rear of main building;

- well at front of lot:
  retain and maintain the well structures. Inspect them for conditions relating to safety; ensure that they are safe. Safety-related changes should not be visually-intrusive.

- playground equipment:
  metal jungle gym;

- wood timber play structure:

- metal combination swing set/slide:
  although these features are not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS, they does communicate the past educational function of the site. Work with local community members to assess these features for their potential to support future interpretive programs. Either preserve them in place or remove, preserve, and store them feature if they are determined to have value regarding their potential to support interpretation.

- street signs along Fourth Street:
  retain sign as required;

- culverts:
  retain and maintain culverts as necessary to ensure proper drainage and the protection of the street and ditch grades;

- propane tank:

- overhead power line and pole with light:
  these features are not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS. Retain and maintain the propane tank as required to ensure safety and as required to meet functional requirements. If building mechanical systems are replaced, and the tank is no longer required, remove it. Retain and maintain power lines and poles as necessary to support use of the building. If new poles are required, consider setting new poles in the location of removed poles.

- miscellaneous stored and stockpiled items:
  work with local community members to inspect these items for their potential to support future interpretive programs. Remove, preserve, and store retained items; remove and dispose of all other items.

- historical marker at front of building:
  unless this marker is important to the community or user, consider replacing it with a new wayside exhibit sited along Fourth Street in a location that does not conflict with access to the building. Visitor safety and visual impacts should be considered when designing and siting a wayside exhibit.

NEW PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT

Building Changes

The building, and possibly the outbuildings, are critical to any program communicating the history and significance of the NHL and NHS. Every effort should be made to ensure the survival of the schoolhouse building. Outbuildings should be retained until interpretation plans can be completed, in the event that they support interpretation.

Site Changes

The primary consideration when evaluating proposed changes to the site is the importance of retaining the open, spatial character of the lot surrounding the Schoolhouse and outbuildings, and the features that are characteristic of the public school use of the property including the playground equipment, flagpole, privy

remains, wood/coal shed, and accessible nature of parcel. Every effort should be made to retain the site's open character and avoid alterations that would result in a loss of such character. Building additions, parking lots, and other permanent alterations may compromise the ability of the site to communicate its significance and importance through interpretation. It is preferable to avoid new construction, particularly in the former location of the Fairview Schoolhouse, at least until archeological investigation can be conducted to determine the potential of the site to yield information about this former feature.

Ongoing Use

It is preferable that the site be occupied and used in a manner that supports rehabilitation through stewardship, and interpretive goals and objectives as they are developed.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

An archeological assessment and inventory should be conducted at this site to better understand its sensitivity to land disturbance. Since little detailed information is known about the character of the site during the nineteenth century, archeological investigations may be an important source of information to support treatment and interpretation. The entire site, particularly those areas surrounding extant and missing structures, should be considered sensitive to soil disturbance. Special consideration should be given to the location of the missing Fairview Schoolhouse.

See Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse Treatment Plan that follows.

NICODEMUS DISTRICT NO. 1 SCHOOLHOUSE TREATMENT PLAN

General Recommendations

- Consider ways to rehabilitate the District No. 1 Schoolhouse and grounds to allow for continued use of the building and site by the community. Limit changes to the landscape until a well-developed site program can be developed. Consider functional, interpretive, and visitor access goals in future rehabilitation plans. New construction supporting visitor access and interpretation should be compatible and accommodate the community's use of the building and site.

- Retain the open character of the site and landscape around the building, the school and the outbuildings, the features that are characteristic of the public school use of the property including the playground equipment, flagpole, and accessible nature of the parcel. Avoid constructing building additions, parking lots, or other permanent alterations.

- Undertake every effort to ensure the survival of the District No. 1 Schoolhouse building, and that the site be occupied and used in an appropriate manner. Work to ensure that treatment supports rehabilitation through stewardship and the interpretive goals and objectives for the townsite.

- Include the Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse parcel in an archeological overview and assessment. Consider the site sensitive to soil disturbance until further investigations have determined otherwise.

Recommendations for Specific Features

(see figure 145.)

1) Retain, maintain, and stabilize the wood shed. Consider the structures in the overall interpretive plan for the townsite.

2) Retain, maintain, and stabilize the privy ruins. Consider the structures in the overall interpretive plan for the townsite.

3) Retain, maintain, and repair grass-surfaced vehicle track as needed to meet functional needs, including visitors arriving on foot. Provide a walkable surface and grass mown low enough to allow for pedestrian access

4) Consider the parking and vehicle access needs of building users, including visitors to the NHS. In the near-term, visitors should access the site via the existing vehicle track. In the future, consider constructing a new access into the site at the southwest corner of the lot from Madison Avenue; install a culvert and construct a crushed stone drive and either a reinforced grass-surfaced parking area or a crushed stone parking lot. Avoid the use of asphalt.

5) Consider methods for providing barrier free access to the building.

6) Retain and maintain grassy fields and ditches throughout the site. Repair areas of bare soil. Remove vegetation from around building foundation.

7) Retain and maintain the well structures. Inspect them for conditions relating to safety and repair deficiencies. Ensure that all safety-related changes are not be visually intrusive.

8) Work with the community to assess the playground equipment for its potential to support future interpretive programs. Either preserve these features in place or remove, preserve, and store this feature if determined to have interpretive value.

9) Retain and maintain propane tank as required to ensure safety and meet functional building requirements. Remove tank if building mechanical systems are upgraded and tank is no longer needed.

10) Consider replacing the existing historical marker with a new interpretive wayside exhibit. Consider visual impacts and visitor safety in its siting.

11) Retain and maintain overhead power lines and poles to support uses of the building. Replace poles in similar location.

12) Retain and maintain street signs to meet functional and safety requirements.

13) Retain and maintain culvert as required to ensure proper drainage and the protection of the street and ditch grades.

14) Work with community to inspect miscellaneous stored and stockpiled items and equipment for their potential to support future interpretive programs. Remove, preserve, and store retained items; remove and dispose of all others.

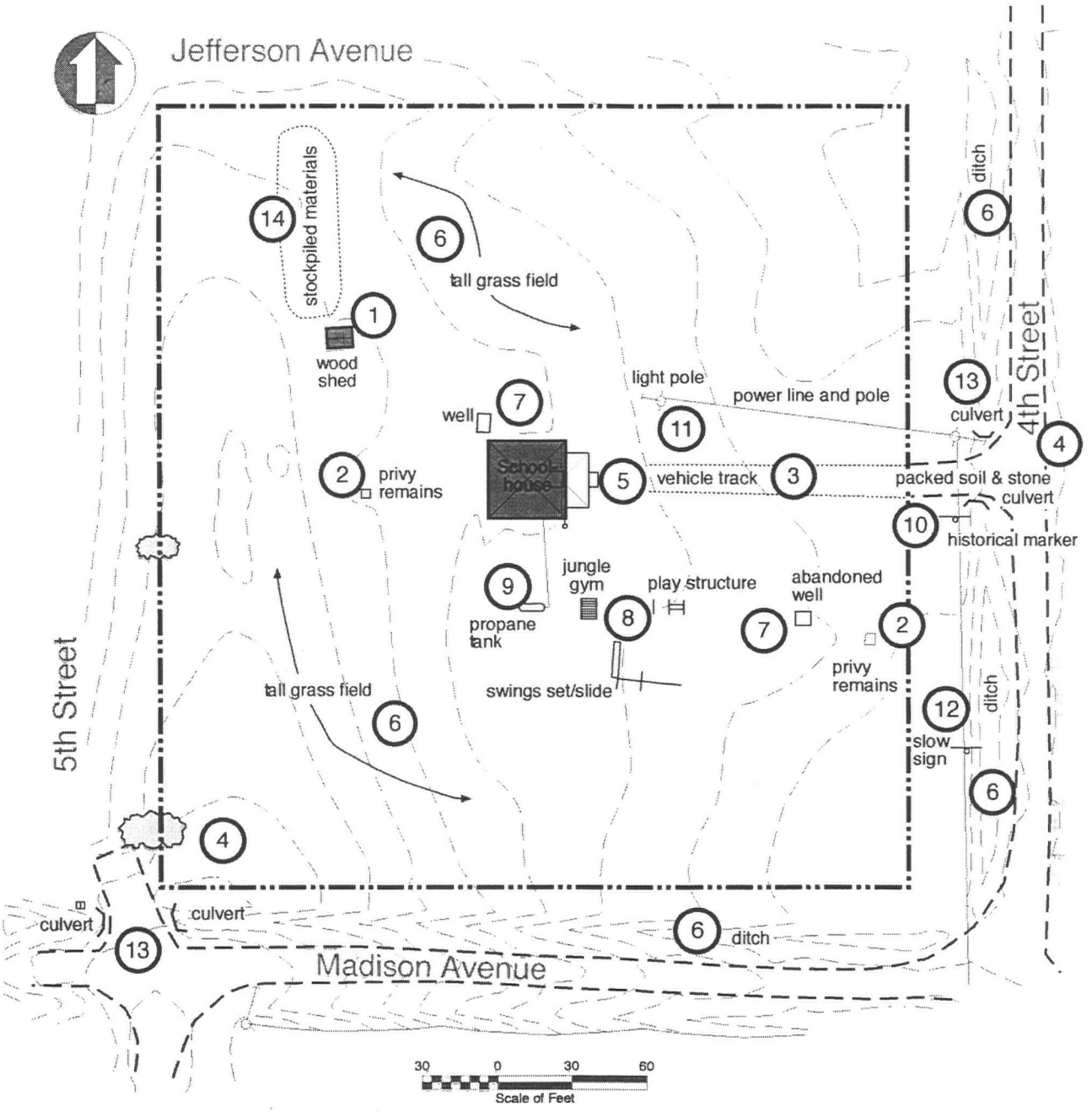


Figure 145.
District No. 1 Schoolhouse treatment recommendations.

A.M.E. Church

(see figure 146. A.M.E. Church treatment recommendations)

The NPS should work with the community during the NPS's efforts to preserve and rehabilitate the building and site to allow for use by the NPS. Changes to the landscape should be limited in scope until such time as a well-developed site program can be developed detailing the types of anticipated and planned uses. In addition, functional, interpretive, and visitor access goals and objectives should shape new interventions in the site. Consideration should be given to limiting changes to those that support visitor access for interpretation.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

- four silos/grain bins:
  consider retaining these structures. They convey the agricultural heritage of the townsite.

- metal storage building:
  although this structure is not essential to communicating the significance of Nicodemus, it does communicate the integration of farming activities within the townsite.

CIRCULATION

- concrete stoop at building entrance:
  this stoop may survive from the early twentieth century. Retain and maintain this stoop; when considering options for accessible route to the building retain the stoop if possible. Take into consideration whether the top elevation of the stoop is below the finished floor elevation of the church building.

- barrier-free access to building:
  construct a new concrete walk flush with the curb cut on Third Street and with the top of the existing stoop, or a new concrete stoop if necessary. It is preferable to construct an accessible walk or ramp system at the front of the building.

VEGETATION

- grass lawn mown closely in areas immediately around the building;

- tall grass field in rear portion of site:
  retain and maintain grass lawn within the church lot and fields outside the church lot. Repair all bare soil and disturbed areas by establishing grass lawn cover. Remove vegetation at building and structure foundations since vegetation may threaten their condition.

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

- historical marker at edge of Third Street:
  unless this marker is important to the community or user, consider replacing the sign with a new wayside exhibit sited along Third Street in a location that does not conflict with access to the building. Visitor safety and visual impacts should be considered when designing and siting a new wayside exhibit.

- yield sign at corner of Adams Avenue and Third Street: retain sign as required.

- snow fencing surrounding debris pile at building;

- debris piles:
  these features should be removed after stabilization measures are completed.

- miscellaneous stored and stockpiled items and equipment:
  work with local community members to inspect these items for their potential to support future interpretive programs. Remove, preserve, and store retained items; remove and dispose of all other items.

- overhead power lines and poles:
  these features are not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS. Retain and maintain as necessary to support use of the building; if new poles are required, consider setting them in the locations of removed poles.

NEW PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT

Building Changes

The building is critical to any program communicating the history and significance of the NHL and NHS. Every effort should be made to ensure the survival of the

building. Additions to the building, such as reconstruction of the missing north vestibule, should be avoided.

Site Changes

The primary consideration when evaluating proposed changes to the site is the importance of retaining the open, spatial character of the lot surrounding the building. Every effort should be made to retain the open character and to avoid alterations that would result in a loss of such character. Building additions, parking lots, and other permanent alterations will compromise the ability of the site to communicate its significance and importance through interpretation.

Ongoing Use

It is preferable that the site be occupied and used in an appropriate manner that would support rehabilitation through stewardship, and any interpretive goals and objectives developed in the future.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

An archeological assessment and inventory should be conducted on the site to better understand its sensitivity to land disturbance. Since little detailed information is known about the character of the site during earlier periods, archeological investigations may be an important source of information to support treatment and interpretation. The entire site should be considered sensitive to soil disturbance.

See A.M.E. Church Treatment Plan that follows.

A.M.E. CHURCH TREATMENT PLAN

General Recommendations

- Retain and maintain the A.M.E. Church building, which is critical to any program to communicate the history and significance of the NHL and NHS. Undertake every effort to ensure the survival of the building. Stabilize the building. Avoid constructing additions, including restoration of the missing north vestibule.

- Work closely with the community to appropriately preserve and rehabilitate the A.M.E. Church building and grounds to allow for identified uses. Limit changes to the landscape until a well-developed site program can be determined.

- Functional, interpretive, and visitor access goals and objectives should shape new interventions in the site. It is preferable that the site be occupied and used in an appropriate manner that supports rehabilitation through stewardship.

- Avoid constructing new buildings and structures, parking lots, and other permanent major alterations on the site.

- Retain the open character of the site.

- Include the A.M.E. Church parcel in an archeological overview and assessment. Consider the site sensitive to soil disturbance until further investigations have determined otherwise.

Recommendations for Specific Features

(see figure 146.)

1) Consider retaining the grain bins and metal Butler building which relate to the agricultural activities within the townsite.

2) Retain and maintain the concrete stoop. When considering options for an accessible route into the building, retain the stoop if possible.

3) Construct a new concrete walk flush with the curb cut on Third Street and with the top of the existing stoop or a new concrete stoop as part of a barrier-free access system; it is preferable to construct an accessible walk/ramp system at the front of the building.

4) Retain and maintain grassy lawn and mown grass fields. Repair areas of bare soil. Remove vegetation along building foundations to prevent threats to its condition.

5) Consider replacing the existing historical marker along Third Street with a new interpretive wayside exhibit. Consider visual impacts and visitor safety in its siting.

6) Retain and maintain the traffic sign to meet functional and safety requirements.

7) Remove debris piles and snow fencing after stabilization efforts are complete.

8) Work with the community to inspect miscellaneous stored and stockpiled items and equipment for their potential to support future interpretive programs. Remove, preserve, and store retained items; remove and dispose of all others.

9) Retain and maintain overhead power lines and poles to support use of the building. Replace poles as needed in similar locations.

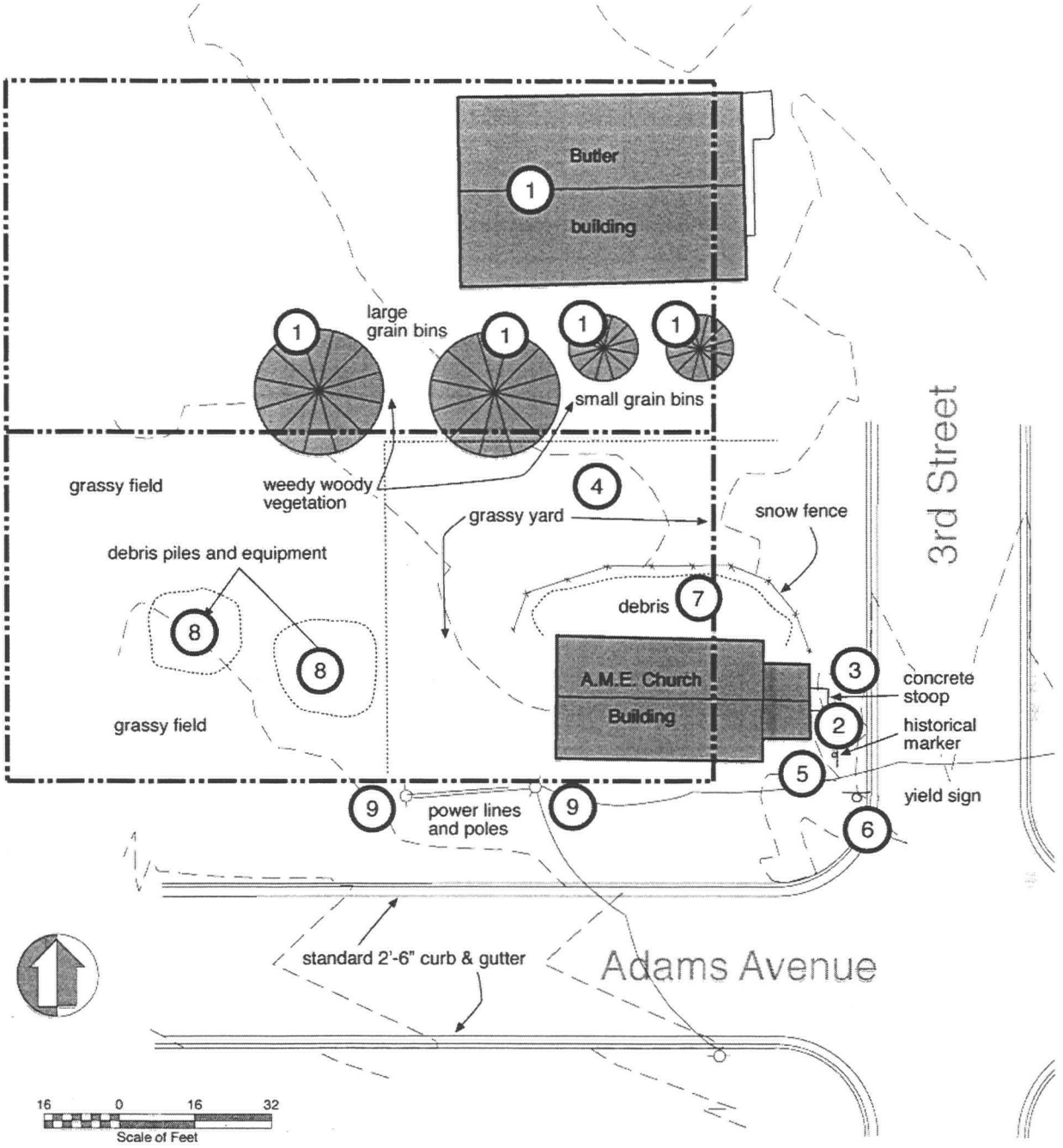


Figure 146.
A.M.E. Church treatment recommendations.

Township Hall

(see figure 147. Township Hall treatment recommendations)

The NPS should work with and support the efforts of the community and the property owner to rehabilitate the building and site to allow for continued use by the community. Changes to the landscape should be limited in scope until such time as a well-developed site program can be developed detailing the types of anticipated and planned uses. In addition, functional, interpretive, and visitor access goals and objectives should shape new interventions in the site. Consideration should be given to limiting changes on the site to support visitor access for interpretation. New construction supporting visitor access and interpretation should be compatible, and accommodate the community's use of the building and site.

STRUCTURES

- well house structure:
  retain and maintain the well structure. Inspect the structure for conditions relating to safety; ensure that the structure is safe. Safety-related changes should not be visually-intrusive.

- Priscilla Art Club building:
  retain and maintain the Priscilla Art Club; undertake repairs as required. This structure could support interpretive programs and should continue to be used to support community programs.

CIRCULATION

- concrete sidewalk accessing the Township Hall from Washington Avenue;

- concrete sidewalk flanking the east side of the Township Hall;

- concrete walk accessing Priscilla Art Club from Washington Avenue:
  retain and maintain these walks. Replace degraded sections including uneven, and heavily spalled or cracked sections that pose trip hazards. Repair the walk by removing whole sections. Match the existing concrete materials and finishes as closely as possible. Consider exposing the light aggregates by washing cement film on the surface. Remove vegetation from the walk since vegetation poses a trip hazard and contributes to the degradation of the concrete.

- steps at front and back of the Priscilla Art Club:
  retain and maintain the steps. If access by the public is desirable for interpretation, this building will need to have a means for barrier-free access.

- grass-surfaced alley:
  retain the alley. Avoid construction that would diminish the character of the linear space.

VEGETATION

- mown grass lawn:
  retain and maintain grass lawn; repair all bare soil and disturbed areas by establishing grass lawn cover.

- Siberian elm trees:

- shade and ornamental trees:
  retain and maintain these trees, which provide shade during the summer. Engage a certified arborist to undertake an inspection of the trees and take measures to mitigate problems and poor condition if found. Replace trees requiring removal; match the species. The two trees flanking the entrance walk appear to be in poor condition. Remove volunteer trees.

- pair of arborvitae shrubs flanking main entrance of Township Hall;

- pair of low spreading juniper shrubs flanking main entrance of Township Hall:
  these features are not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS; retain and maintain shrubs as desired.

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

- wood and metal benches with backs at front walk;

- wood and metal benches without backs on concrete slab at southeast corner of site;

- wood picnic tables with benches on west side of concrete walk accessing the Township Hall;

- cast-concrete water fountain;

- USPS standard metal mail box, with decorative wood post;

- propane tanks;
- basketball court with metal backboards and hoops;
- trash receptacles;
- overhead lights mounted on metal poles at tennis courts;
- tennis courts with chain link fencing and metal basketball backboards and hoops;
- metal flagpole at the front of the Township Hall;
- overhead power lines and pole on Washington Avenue and behind the Priscilla Art Club:
  these features are not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS. Retain and maintain these features as required to meet functional requirements. Raise the grade of the lawn around the concrete pad to render it flush with the top of the slab to mitigate the trip hazard. Retain and maintain the propane tanks as required to ensure safety and as required to meet functional requirements. If building mechanical systems are replaced, and the tank is no longer required, remove it. Retain and maintain overhead power lines and poles as necessary to support use of the building. If new poles are required, consider setting new poles in the location of removed poles.
- miscellaneous stored and stockpiled items and equipment:
  work with local community members to inspect these items for their potential to support future interpretive programs. Remove, preserve, and store retained items; remove and dispose of all other items.
- NHS identity sign at front of building:
  retain and maintain the NPS NHS sign as long as the building is used as a visitor contact facility.

NEW PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT

Building Changes

The building is crucial to any program communicating the history and significance of the NHL and NHS. Every effort should be made to ensure the survival of the building. Additions to the building should be avoided.

Site Changes

Depending on the community's requirements for retaining the sports courts, these features could be removed or replaced by new sports facilities. The primary consideration when evaluating proposed changes to the site is the importance of retaining the direct, quasi-formal approach to the door, commercial nature of site lighting, small site furnishings that support public use, paved public sidewalk, plaque and date of construction, and substantial construction materials and quality of workmanship on the building. The addition of new buildings should be avoided; if required, additions should be designed in such a way as not to impact the interpretation of the Township Hall.

Ongoing Use

It is preferable that the site be occupied and used by the community in a manner that would support rehabilitation through stewardship, and any interpretive goals and objectives developed in the future. In the long term, it is preferable for the NPS to relocate their visitor contact facility to another site. It is important to maintain the community government or some other local civic role of the building if at all possible.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Although the site has undergone substantial changes since the nineteenth century, an archeological assessment and inventory should be undertaken to better understand the sensitivity of the site to land disturbance. Since little detailed information is known about the character of the site as it developed during earlier periods, archeological investigations may be an important source of information to support treatment and interpretation. The entire site should be considered sensitive to soil disturbance.

See Township Hall Treatment Plan that follows.

TOWNSHIP HALL TREATMENT PLAN

General Recommendations

- Consider ways to rehabilitate the Township Hall and associated features to allow for continued use by the community and accommodation of its needs. Also consider functional, interpretive, and visitor access goals in future rehabilitation plans. New construction supporting visitor access and interpretation should be compatible and accommodate the community's use of the building and site.

- Undertake every effort to ensure the survival of the Township Hall building. Avoid additions to the building.

- Consider the community's need for the sports courts. Consider removing or replacing them with new sports facilities if the community determines it necessary or desirable.

- Retain if at all possible the local government role or another local civic role within the building. Consider in the long term relocating the NPS visitor contact functions to a different site.

- Include the Township Hall parcel in an archeological overview and assessment. Consider the site sensitive to soil disturbance until further investigations have determined otherwise.

Recommendations for Specific Features

(see figure 147.)

1) Retain and maintain the well structure. Inspect it for conditions relating to safety and repair deficiencies. Ensure that all safety-related changes are not visually intrusive.

2) Retain and maintain the Priscilla Art Club building, and community program uses. Inspect it for conditions relating to safety, and repair deficiencies. Consider including it in townsite interpretation. If access by the public for interpretation is desirable, establish a means of barrier-free access.

3) Retain and maintain existing concrete sidewalks. Remove vegetation from the walks. Replace degraded, heavily spalled and cracked sections by removing whole sections and matching existing concrete materials and finishing as closely as possible.

4) Retain the grass-surfaced alley. Avoid construction that diminishes its character.

5) Retain and maintain grassy lawn. Repair areas of bare soil.

6) Retain and maintain shade trees and ornamental shrubs. Engage a certified arborist to inspect trees annually. Replace Siberian elms in kind as necessary. Remove volunteer trees.

7) Retain and maintain the picnic tables, benches, water fountain, mail box, basketball court, trash receptacles, overhead lights, tennis courts, and flagpole only as necessary to meet functional needs. Raise lawn grade around concrete pad to be flush with the top of the slab associated with the backless benches, to mitigate the trip hazard.

8) Retain and maintain propane tanks as required to ensure safety and to meet the functional requirements of the building. Remove tanks if building mechanical systems are upgraded and the tanks are no longer necessary.

9) Retain and maintain overhead power lines and poles to support use of the park. Replace poles as needed in similar locations.

10) Retain and maintain the NPS NHS sign as long as the building is used as an NPS visitor contact facility.

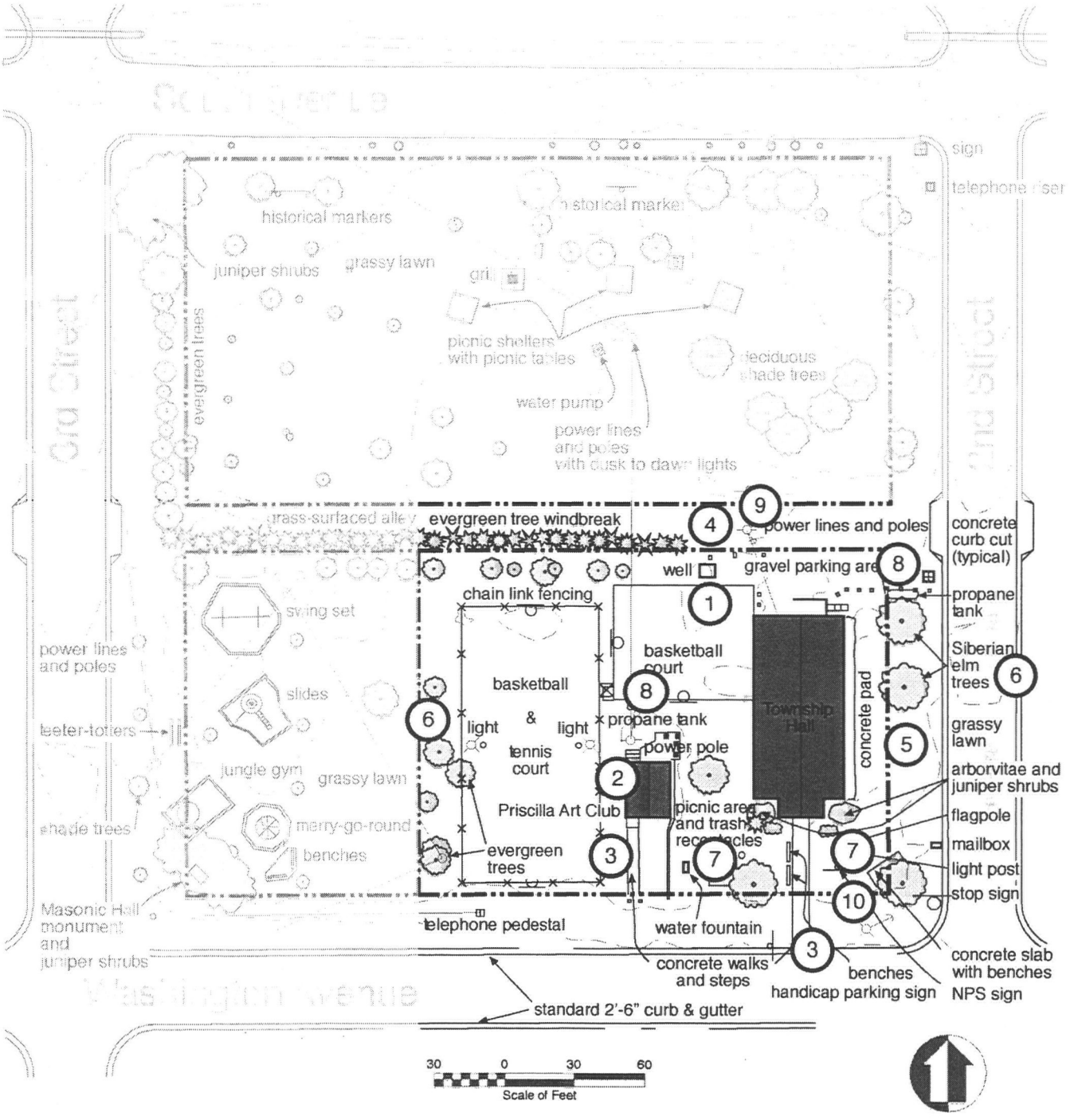


Figure 147.
Township Hall treatment recommendations.

Township Park

(see figure 148. Township Park treatment recommendations)

The NPS should work with and support the efforts of the community to rehabilitate the site to allow for continued use of the park by the community. The playground should be rehabilitated to meet safety and accessible design criteria.

VEGETATION

- mown grass lawn:
  retain and maintain grass lawn; repair all bare soil and disturbed areas by establishing grass lawn cover.

- deciduous trees lining Third Street, the alley, and the eastern edge of the park;

- evergreen windbreak along northern edge of the park:
  retain and maintain trees, which provide shade during summer and a windbreak during the winter; engage a certified arborist to conduct an inspection of trees and provide measures to mitigate problems and poor condition if found. Replace trees requiring removal; match species.

- low spreading juniper shrubs at Masonic Hall commemorative monument at corner of Third Street and Washington Avenue:
  retain and maintain these shrubs.

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

- playground equipment and wood timber edging and safety surface:
  these features are not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS. Undertake a detailed inspection of all individual existing equipment. It is likely that the existing equipment does not meet the minimum safety standards for play equipment established by the Federal Consumer Products Safety Commission. If the community has an identified need for play equipment, replace all existing equipment with new equipment that meets the latest safety requirements. Remove and properly dispose of all timber edging and surface materials; replace with safety surface materials meeting the minimum requirements for play equipment surfaces. Locate new equipment so that there are sufficient clear safety zones around each piece of equipment; the playground should have barrier-free access, accessible play equipment, and group-specific equipment.

- benches;

- overhead power lines and poles:
  these features are not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS. Retain and maintain the benches as required to meet functional requirements. Retain and maintain the overhead power lines and poles as necessary to support use of the park. If new poles are required, consider setting new poles in the location of removed poles.

- Masonic Hall commemorative monument, brick wall with engraved stone or cast concrete commemorative panels on concrete slab, and the engraved stone marker mounted on brick wall:
  retain and maintain the monument.

NEW PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT

Site Changes

Depending on the community's requirements for retaining the playground, the park could be rehabilitated or re-designed. If a playground is not suitable or required by the community, the community and the NPS could explore the potential to site new buildings within the parcel. In the past, the lot included commercial structures fronting Washington Avenue. New buildings could serve new uses, and support the interpretation of the past commercial uses and character of Washington Avenue.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Although the site has undergone substantial change during the twentieth century, an archeological assessment and inventory should be conducted to better understand the sensitivity of the site to land disturbance. Since little detailed information is available about the character of the site during earlier periods, archeological investigations may be an important source of information to support treatment and interpretation. The entire site should be considered sensitive to soil disturbance.

See Township Park Treatment Plan that follows.

TOWNSHIP PARK TREATMENT PLAN

General Recommendations

- Consider carefully the community's need for the play equipment. If it is desirable to retain the existing use, consider rehabilitating the park to meet safety and accessible design criteria. If a playground is not suitable or required by the community, explore the potential to site new buildings within the parcel. New buildings could serve new uses and support the interpretation of the past commercial aspects and character of Washington Avenue.

- Include the Township Park in an archeological overview and assessment. Consider the site sensitive to soil disturbance until further investigations have determined otherwise.

Recommendations for Specific Features

(see figure 148.)

1) Retain and maintain grassy lawn. Repair areas of bare soil.

2) Retain and maintain shade and evergreen trees and ornamental shrubs. Engage a certified arborist to inspect trees annually. Replace in kind as necessary.

3) Conduct a detailed inspection of all existing play equipment. Replace equipment as necessary to meet the Federal Consumer Products Safety Commission safety standards. Remove and properly dispose of all timber edging and surface materials. Replace with safety surface materials meeting the minimum requirements for play equipment surfaces. Locate new equipment with sufficient clear safety zones around each piece of equipment; the playground should have barrier-free access, accessible play equipment, and group-specific equipment.

4) Retain and maintain benches only as necessary to meet functional needs.

5) Retain and maintain Masonic Hall monument.

6) Retain and maintain power lines and poles to support use of the park. Replace poles as needed in similar locations.

7) Establish a new wayside exhibit along Washington Avenue relating to the history of the Masonic Hall. Consider visual impacts and visitor safety in its siting.

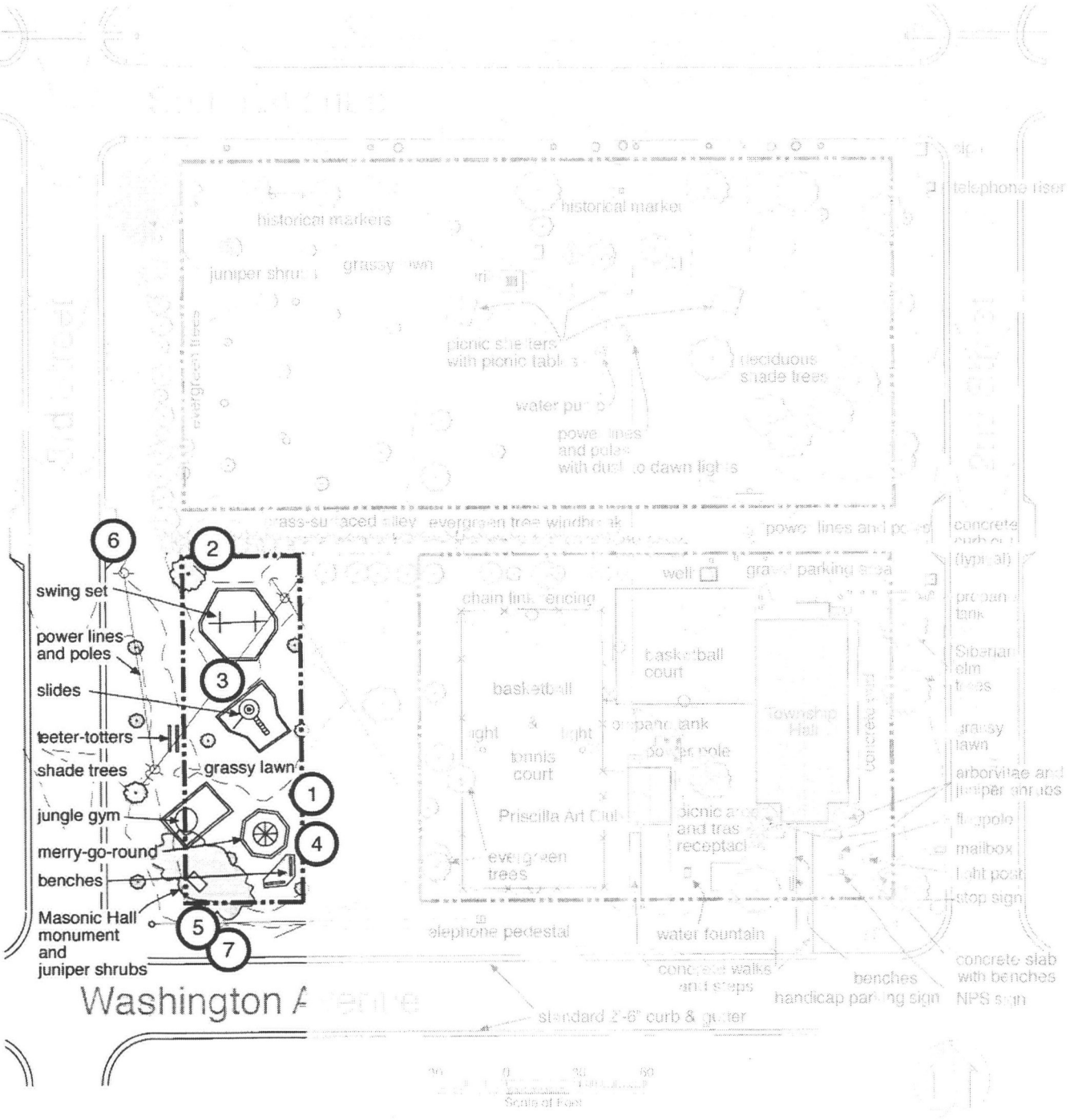


Figure 148.
Township Park treatment recommendations.

Roadside Park

(see figure 149. Roadside Park treatment recommendations)

The NPS should work with and support any efforts on the part of the community to maintain the use and character of this park. In particular, the use of the park during special events, including Homecoming, should play a key role in how the site is managed.

STRUCTURES

- metal and plastic picnic shelters:
  retain the shelters as long as they can be maintained in good condition; when necessary, replaced the shelters. It is not necessary to match the design and locations of the existing structures. Design facilities to meet current needs in manner that does not detract from the interpretation of the Township Hall.

CIRCULATION

- grass-surfaced alley:
  retain the alley by avoiding construction that would diminish the character of the linear space.

VEGETATION

- grass lawn, closely mown:
  retain and maintain grass lawn;
  repair all bare soil and disturbed areas by establishing grass lawn cover.

- deciduous shade trees:

- ornamental shrubs:
  retain and maintain these trees and shrub. Engage a certified arborist to conduct an inspection of the trees and provide measures to mitigate problems and poor condition if found. Replacement of trees in poor condition should match existing species.

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

- picnic tables and benches;

- grill;

- overhead power lines and poles:
  these features are not critical to communicating the significance of the NHS. retain and maintain the grill, benches, and picnic tables as required to meet functional requirements. Retain and maintain overhead power lines and poles as necessary to support use of the park; if new poles are required, consider setting new poles in the location of removed poles.

- informational, directional, regulatory signs:
  retain and maintain signs as required to meet functional and safety requirements.

- historical markers:
  retain and maintain NHL marker, and NPS identity sign. Unless the Kansas state historical marker is important to the community, consider replacing it with a new wayside exhibit sited along South Avenue in a location that does not conflict with access to the park. Visitor safety and visual impacts should be considered when designing and siting a wayside exhibit.

NEW PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT

Site Changes

The open character of grass lawn dotted with trees should be retained. The addition of buildings and other park structures should be avoided. The NPS and the community should investigate the requirements for upgrading the infrastructure of the park to better support special events. Lighting, electric service, and other upgraded items may be required to serve the needs of special event organizers and vendors.

Ongoing Use

It is preferable that the site be occupied and used by the community in an appropriate manner that supports the continuity of community-sponsored events.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Although the site has undergone substantial changes during the twentieth century, an archeological assessment and inventory should be conducted to better understand the sensitivity of the site to land disturbance. Since little detailed information is available to suggest the character of the site during earlier periods, archeological investigations may be an important source of information to support treatment and interpretation. The entire site should be considered sensitive to soil disturbance.

See Roadside Park Treatment Plan that follows.

ROADSIDE PARK TREATMENT PLAN

General Recommendations

- Maintain the use and character of the Roadside Park.
- Consider carefully the needs associated with its use during Homecoming when developing management strategies for the site. Consider upgrading lighting and electric service to serve the needs of special event organizers and vendors.
- Avoid constructing new buildings and structures.
- Include the Roadside Park in an archeological overview and assessment. Consider the site sensitive to soil disturbance until further investigations have determined otherwise.

Recommendations for Specific Features

(see figure 149.)

1) Retain and maintain picnic shelters until they begin to deteriorate. Design replacements to meet needs and in a way that does not detract from interpretation of Township Hall.
2) Retain the alley. Avoid construction that diminishes its character.
3) Retain and maintain grassy lawn. Repair areas of bare soil.
4) Retain and maintain evergreen and shade trees and ornamental shrubs. Engage a certified arborist to inspect trees annually. Replace in kind as necessary.
5) Retain and maintain picnic tables and benches only as necessary to meet functional needs.
6) Retain and maintain signs to meet functional and safety requirements.
7) Retain and maintain power lines and poles to support use of the park. Replace poles as needed in similar locations.
8) Establish a new wayside exhibit along South Avenue. Consider visual impacts and visitor safety in its siting.

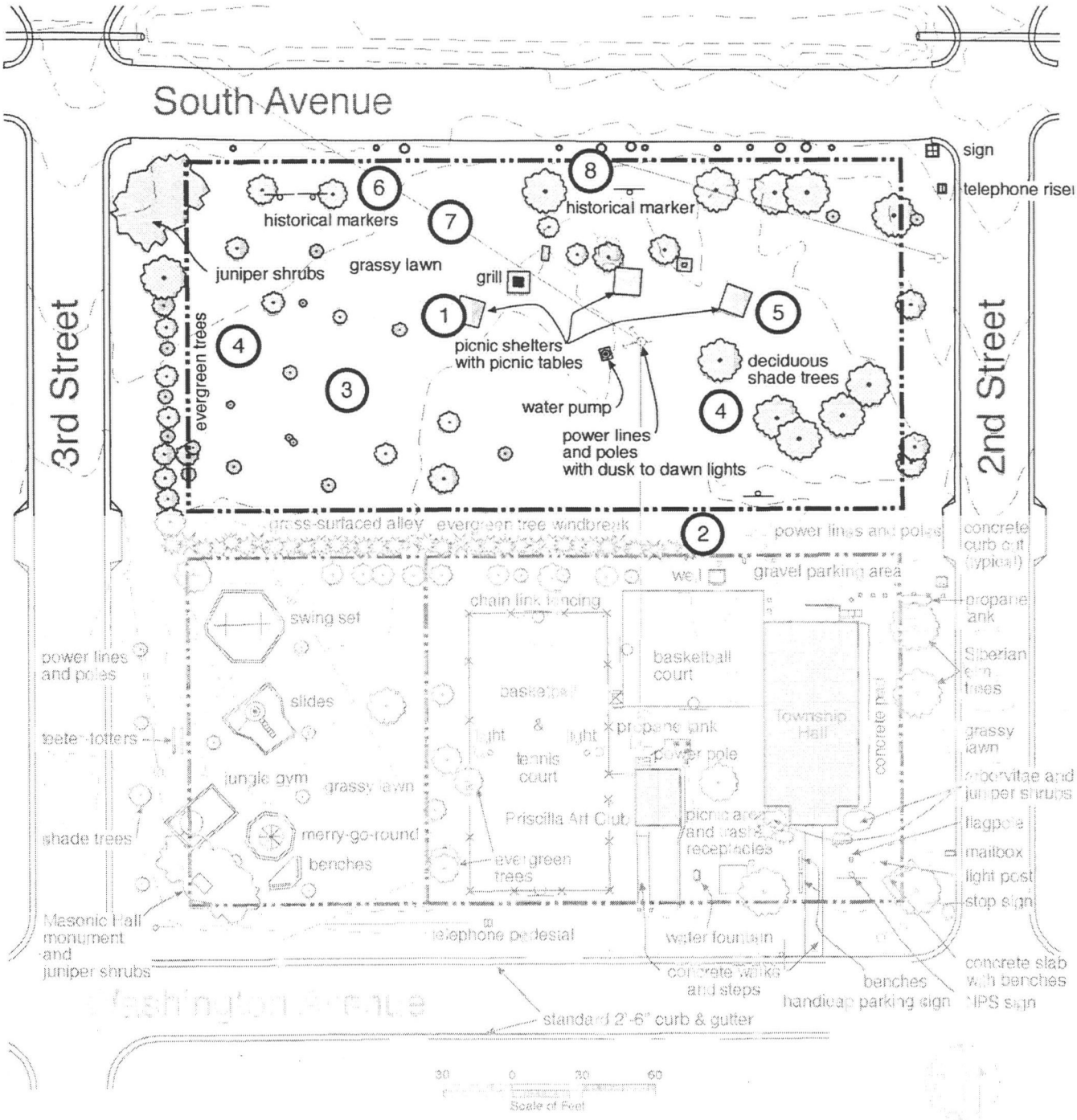


Figure 149.
Roadside Park treatment recommendations.



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REFERENCES

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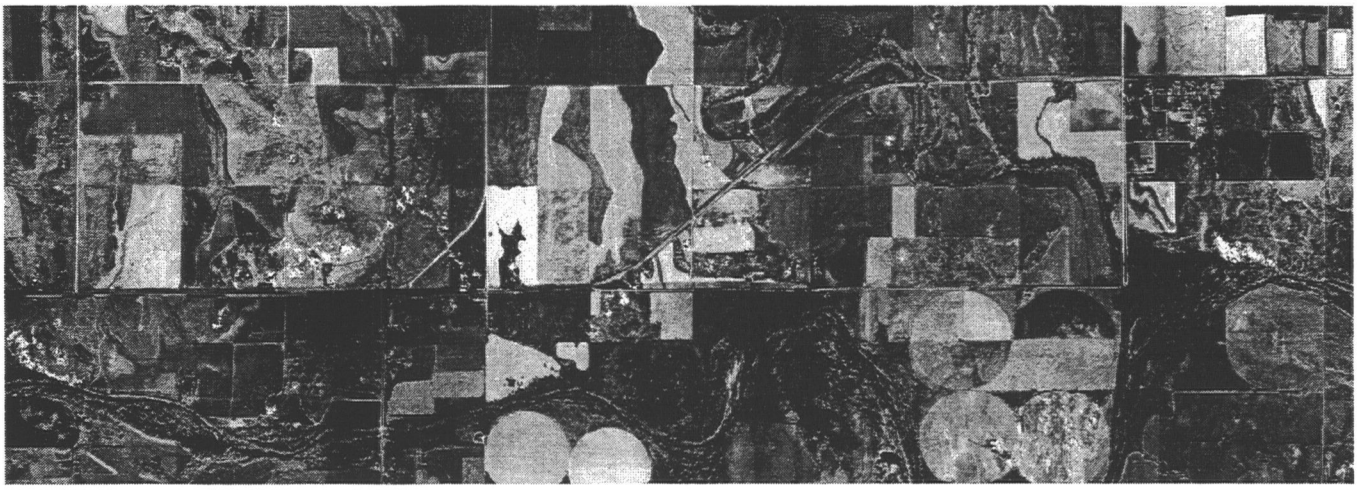
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Project Scope and Methodology

PROJECT SCOPE

The Nicodemus CLR scope of work, prepared by the NPS in July 1999, identifies two Title I phases to be undertaken concurrently in support of the development of this CLR, and three phases to potentially be undertaken as funding became available. The two Title 1 phases initiated in 1999 included:

- Phase 1—project organization, research, field investigation, analysis, recommendation development, conceptual design, and report writing; and

- Phase 2—preparation of aerial photography and topographic, feature, and boundary and mapping services and a title search for the NHS properties.

Two of the other three phases described in the project scope of work, referred to as Phases 3, 4, and 5 respectively, have also been initiated, including:

- Phase 3—presentation of study results; and

- Phase 4—production of a site history booklet.

The final phase—Phase 5—involves preparation of landscape construction documents, specifications, cost estimates, and recommendations for phasing. This work may be optioned by the NPS at a later date, but is not currently part of this CLR.

The specific scope items associated with Phases 1 through 4 are as follows:

Phase 1

Project organization—attend a pre-design conference, during which the project team will establish project administration procedures; coordinate proposed project activities; collect and review available background materials; identify available community resources; and conduct an inspection tour of the NHS.

Field investigations and research—conduct field investigations of the seven identified units within the townsite, the townsite/Section, and the Township in general in order to produce an inventory of existing conditions, note archeological sites, and assess the condition of features identified within the seven units; and conduct and tape-record thirty oral interviews with residents, former residents, and other appropriate contacts.

Report production—prepare a Cultural Landscape Report comprised of written narrative information as well as illustrative graphics outlined as follows:

Chapter I - Administrative Data—Document the scope of the report and project area, describe the properties involved and methodology(ies) used, summarize the project findings, and identify all A/E staff associated with the project services.

Chapter II - Site History—Provide a written narrative illustrated with historic photographs, maps, and drawings, and "Historic Period Plans," with a primary focus on describing the physical evolution of the site using secondary and primary sources, including oral interviews, photographs, and maps. Develop a historical context for each major period of development and a chronological description of the evolution of the physical landscape, including the environmental setting, layout, circulation, spatial organization, land use practices and resulting patterns, cultural or ethnic expressions, views and vistas, vegetation related to land use, and other characteristics and features associated with each major period. Prepare historic period plans for each identified period of the site's history.

Chapter III - Existing Conditions—Provide a written narrative, illustrated by maps, photographs, and/or drawings, describing the existing condition of various landscape features, including environmental setting, spatial organization, current land uses, circulation, structures, small-scale features, suspected or known archeological resources, and, if readily available, above-ground and/or below-ground utilities. Assess the condition of historic landscape features based on the Cultural Landscapes Inventory definitions of condition. Prepare an existing conditions base map using the aerial photography and survey mapping prepared in Phase 2 of this project.

Chapter IV - Analysis—Provide a written narrative, illustrated by maps, photographs, and/or drawings, describing the integrity of features or components and the significance of the landscape. Prepare an analysis map that identifies zones of relative levels of integrity. Define a period (or periods) of significance for the site, refining

or validating the currently defined period of significance as described in the 1996 NHL nomination. Identify and describe the contributing, non-contributing, and missing historic features and characteristics. Summarize the implications of the analysis for future management of the property.

Chapter V - Management Issues—Provide a narrative describing and refining the management issues and concerns, identified through consultation with park staff, to be addressed by the treatment plan recommendations.

Chapter VI - Treatment Recommendations & Analysis of Alternatives—Provide a narrative proposing, justifying, and assessing the implications of several feasible preservation treatment approaches for the landscape of the NHS, and presenting a preferred approach. In addition, present specific narrative recommendations, supplemented with illustrations, supporting the preferred alternative. Address life safety concerns, universal accessibility, NHS parking requirements, the issues identified in Chapter V, and the results of the analysis presented in Chapter IV, within the constraints of applicable laws and NPS policies, standards, and guidelines. Prepare a conceptual design/treatment plan illustrating the preferred treatment approach and specific recommendations.

Chapter VII - Design Guidelines—Provide a narrative and graphic depiction of design guidelines for the project area lying outside of the five NHS units. These guidelines are intended to inform Government response to potential actions (both internal and external) that may impact the historic character of the NHL and its setting. The guidelines should be specific and address such issues as land use, massing, spatial organization, materials, and setback. Support the narrative guidelines with illustrations that are sufficiently specific to guide NPS staff without professional planning, landscape architectural, or architectural training. These illustrations may depict examples of appropriate or inappropriate treatments.

Chapter VIII - Implementation Recommendations—Provide a narrative depiction of general recommendations for phasing and packaging the preferred alternative, project statements (project description, justification, "Class C" cost estimates) for implementing discrete phases or packages, and recommendations for areas and/or topics requiring further historical research, study, and/or archeological/or physical investigation.

The scope of work also suggests that the project team use innovative approaches to investigation, mapping, analysis, and recommendation development in order to capture the emotional connections of people to place as evident at Nicodemus, and to recognize the essence and importance of Nicodemus as a continuing, living community.

Phase 2

Provide aerial photography and topographic, feature, and boundary survey and mapping services, and title search, described as follows:

Flight Line Aerial Photography—produce two sets of color infrared aerial photographs and two sets of black and white aerial photographs for documenting and mapping Nicodemus Township (36 sections) at a scale of 4 inches = 1 mile, and for documenting, mapping, and surveying the Nicodemus townsite (1 section) at a scale of 1 inch = 40 feet, with 1 foot contour intervals.

Topographic, Feature, and Boundary Survey and Mapping—complete a topographic, feature, and boundary survey and prepare a geo-referenced base map for the five units associated with the Nicodemus NHS, and for the two publicly-owned units located in the townsite of Nicodemus, Kansas. Conduct field survey work and research to establish the boundary of the Nicodemus NHS, identify individual property lines within the NHS boundaries and the two other units, set monuments, determine acreages, develop legal descriptions, and locate and map all major and minor structures, including buildings, streets, sidewalks, and water features, etc., in accordance with all boundary survey requirements for the state of Kansas.

Title Search—provide title research for the five units comprising Nicodemus NHS and two additional units, all located within the town of Nicodemus, Kansas, in order to provide documentation of historic ownership and a basis for future transfer of ownership.

Phase 3

Presentation of Study Results—conduct two meetings to present the results of the research, field investigation, and analysis to the staff of the NHS and to members of the General Management Plan (GMP) team, Nicodemus Historical Society, and/or the interested public. The purpose of both presentations will be to provide

information for NPS staff, and potentially, to inform other interested parties of results. Both meetings will last at least one day in length. The A/E shall be responsible for taking and submitting minutes to the Contracting Officer within ten (10) working days.

The first presentation will summarize the findings of the "Site History" research and findings of the "Analysis" section. The presentation will be made to the staff of the NHS and, potentially, to members of the GMP team and/or interested community members.
The second meeting will present various treatment recommendations and alternatives to the staff of the NHS and, potentially, to members of the GMP team and/or interested community members. This meeting may be organized as a facilitated meeting (facilitator to be provided by the Government) to incorporate community involvement in the development of a preferred treatment alternative, or to provide opportunity for public comment.

Phase 4

Produce site history booklet—present a summary of the results of the research conducted, the written historical context and site history, and other pertinent information in a readable booklet format. This product will make the results of this CLR study available to the broader public. Produce a camera-ready master copy of a booklet for offset printing by the Government. The booklet will be in an approximately 5-1/2" by 7" format. The booklet will be illustrated (color preferred), using materials gathered during earlier phases. No additional research will be required.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Research

Prior to the initiation of research, the NPS provided OCULUS with a substantial amount of collected information. The methodology for all directed research conducted for the CLR was based on and designed around this preliminary body of data. The research occurred in three stages.

The first stage involved gathering and copying all secondary sources, beyond those provided, that appeared relevant to the three study areas defined under the project scope—Nicodemus NHS, the townsite of Nicodemus, and Nicodemus Township—and their regional and national contexts. An initial research trip to Graham County, Kansas, was made in early December 1999. Three sites were visited during this trip—the Graham County Courthouse, Graham County Public Library, and Graham County Historical Society, all of which are located in Hill City, Kansas. Books, reports, clippings files, and microfilmed records were reviewed.

The second stage involved conducting preliminary research in primary documents located at the Graham County Courthouse and Graham County Historical Society. Original and microfilmed primary documents, including maps, plat books, and photograph collections were researched to target the physical history of periods not fully addressed in secondary documents.

The third stage involved the review of oral history interviews conducted in 1983 and 1996 and microfilmed period newspapers from Nicodemus and surrounding western and central Kansas towns. These period newspapers provided critical information about the early history and development of Nicodemus and about the perception of the new settlers and their town within Graham County and beyond. Microfilm copies of these materials were provided to OCULUS from the NPS files at Fort Larned National Historic Site, Kansas, as were a limited number of relatively contemporary photographs of Nicodemus, and other photographs copied from the NPS's files of residents' historic photographs collected at recent Homecoming celebrations.

Oral histories previously conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the NPS were reviewed for information regarding the social and physical history of Nicodemus. These interviews provided a substantial amount of new information on twentieth century Nicodemus and suggested potential interviewees and questions to incorporate into the oral history component of the CLR.

A second research trip for the project was made in January of 2000 to visit additional repositories in eastern Kansas. During this trip, the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka, the University of Kansas in Lawrence, and Kansas State University in Manhattan were visited. At each of these repositories, previously identified secondary sources were reviewed and copied and new research involving primary source documents was conducted. Historic photographs of interest were identified at the Kansas State Historical Society, and copies were ordered for use in the CLR. The significant collections of the Nicodemus Historical Society housed in the Spencer Research Library at the University of

Kansas were reviewed. This collection contains a number of historic photos of Nicodemus and the surrounding vicinity and has several important manuscripts detailing the history of the town. Other important sources of historic photographs were two academic documents—the 1951 University of Missouri doctoral dissertation of Van B. Shaw, and the 1943 Kansas State College at Fort Hays graduate thesis of William Belleau.

A final stage of historical research involved a more thorough review of the collected primary and secondary source data in order to begin drafting an outline for the site physical history of Nicodemus. In addition, a more thorough search for project area maps and plats not held in the repositories listed above was conducted. The Kansas Department of Transportation and the Graham County School District were contacted; these organizations provided several maps that were useful to the project.

Additional research trips to the University of Virginia Library and the National Archives in Washington, DC, were subsequently conducted to develop appropriate local, state, and national contexts. Records reviewed at these facilities included original Government Land Office surveyors' notes for Graham County, Kansas, and census statistics relating to population, and agricultural and industrial production. The Library of Congress records for Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps were reviewed; it appears that, as an unincorporated town, no Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps were ever prepared for Nicodemus. The availability of historic aerial photographs was also investigated by the CLR team. Two historic aerials dating from the 1930s and 1940s were procured from a USDA repository, providing one of the few primary source materials illustrating the community prior to the 1950s.

Field Investigations

Two trips to Nicodemus were made for fieldwork on behalf of the CLR. The first trip was conducted by OCULUS Principal Rob McGinnis and Landscape Architect Rachel Evans Lloyd on December 10th and 11th, 1999. The focus of field investigations on December 10th included a general pedestrian-level reconnaissance of the Nicodemus townsite, as well as a pre-documentation windshield-level reconnaissance of Nicodemus Township and the town of Bogue in Wild Horse Township. On December 11th, field investigations focused on windshield-level documentation of the Nicodemus Township landscape using maps and photographs to record observations.

The second visit was conducted by OCULUS Principal Liz Sargent and Intern Landscape Architect Pam Liu during the July 2000 Homecoming Celebration event. The focus of the field investigation was on documentation of the seven sites, condition assessments of inventoried resources within the sites, and additional windshield-level reconnaissance of Nicodemus Township and the townsite. The fieldwork efforts included ground-truthing base map data, photographic documentation of landscape features, and directed investigation of sites to fill gaps in information identified during the development of early drafts of the CLR.

Interviews

In anticipation of conducting oral interviews with residents of the Nicodemus area and former residents and/or family members currently living in the Denver, Colorado, area, the project team collaborated on the development of a list of potential interview questions and interview candidates. The team first queried NPS personnel regarding any questions and interview candidates that they considered relevant to the study. Project landscape historian Dr. Benjamin Ford subsequently developed a memorandum that identified the NPS's questions and interview candidates; summarized the recommendations for further study information available in the 1983–1984 HABS interviews and the 1998 Jennifer Michael oral history projects at Nicodemus; and described the gaps in information he had encountered while preparing the site history that would benefit from directed oral history questions. This memorandum was then submitted to project consulting historian and area resident Angela Bates-Tompkins for review. Ms. Tompkins then suggested a number of additional questions. The growing list of questions was then provided to the team involved in preparing the HSR for the NHS. The HSR team also suggested additional building-specific questions to be incorporated into the interviews. The final list of questions was provided to project oral historian Luis Torres, along with a list of potential interview candidates developed by the CLR team, relying particularly on the recommendations of Ms. Tompkins.

In mid- to late April 2001, Mr. Torres visited Nicodemus over a two-week period to conduct the interviews. Facilitated by Ms. Tompkins, Mr. Torres conducted interviews with some twenty-three area residents using the list of questions prepared by the CLR team. In early May, Mr. Torres traveled to Denver, Colorado, where he conducted interviews with six more individuals, primarily descendants and former residents of Nicodemus, again facilitated by Ms. Tompkins. During the trip to Colorado, Mr. Torres also visited Colorado Springs where he interviewed Mr. Van B. Shaw who had lived in Nicodemus in 1949 while collecting material for his doctoral dissertation on the townsite.

During the summer of 2001, the tapes of the oral histories were transcribed by Mr. Torres, and the transcriptions provided to CLR and HSR project team members.

Aerial Survey and Photography

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The aerial photography of the project area was obtained by Bucher, Willis & Ratliff Corporation of Salina, Kansas, using their Cessna 206 Aircraft, equipped with a calibrated Zeiss RMK A aerial mapping camera. The camera was mounted through the bottom of the airplane. The oblique photography was obtained through the window of the airplane using a 35-mm camera. Images were taken from the four sides and corners of the townsite to match similar views available from the 1950s as closely as possible.

All aerial photography was obtained in one flight. Vertical photography of the entire Nicodemus Township was acquired using 2443 Kodak IR film at a photo scale of approximately 1"=1,320'. Vertical photography for mapping the 10-acre Nicodemus townsite was acquired using black and white film at a negative scale of approximately 1"=250'. This is suitable for use in production of topographic mapping at a scale of 1"=40' with 1' contour intervals.

PHOTOGRAMMETRIC SERVICES

Topographic data was compiled for the Nicodemus townsite (approximately 161 acres) at a scale of 1"=40' from the 1"=250' scale aerial photography. Planimetric features were shown which were normal for 1"=40' scale mapping and that were clearly discernible from the aerial photography. Contours were generated at 1' intervals from the data collected. Spot elevations were placed at all road intersections, bridges, culverts, tops, saddles, depressions, and areas where contours do not sufficiently delineate the terrain. All planimetric and topographic features conform to standards set forth in the "United States National Map Accuracy Standards." However, in areas where the ground is obscured due to foliage, brush, or timber, contours may be shown as dashed lines and may not meet accuracy standards. In areas where the ground is completely obscured by vegetation, contours and spot elevations are omitted.

The items generated for use by the team included:

- Two sets of 9" x 9" black-and-white aerial contact prints;
- Two sets of 9" x 9" IR color aerial contact prints;
- One photo index on USGS base map mylar with photo centers and photo numbers shown;
- One 1"=40' scale map (mylar) of the Nicodemus townsite;
- Eight 8" x 10" black and white photo enlargements of the oblique photos, matching the 1950s-era photos as closely as possible.

GROUND SURVEY SERVICES (PHOTO CONTROL)

The photo control for the project was provided by Forgy Surveying. The project had to be tied to state plane coordinates. The nearest NGS triangulation station, named "Spring," was three miles west and three miles north of Nicodemus. Forgy Surveying traversed from this station to Nicodemus and back again, setting a control point at the north edge of Nicodemus. The error of closure was 1:120,000, which is well within the normal limits for this type of survey. Forgy Surveying then set various control points throughout the town which would be proximate to the different sites to be surveyed. The vertical control was established by running a line from a government benchmark located one mile south of Nicodemus at the northwest quadrant of an intersection of a road that runs along the west side of town. Benchmarks were set at all the sites to be surveyed and tied to the level circuit, providing double runs to insure accuracy.

After setting the horizontal and vertical control, Forgy Surveying then proceeded to survey the various sites through standard surveying methods. The instruments used were a Leica 8000 total station for horizontal control and a Wild NA2 automatic level for vertical control. These same instruments were used in establishing the control points used by the photogrammetric department of Bucher and Willis.

Base Map Preparation

Base maps of the townsite and seven properties were prepared using AutoCAD files provided by Forgy Surveying. These maps were then taken into the field and examined for accuracy. The maps for this CLR have been maintained in AutoCAD R14 as ".dwg" files. They exist at two scales to depict the townsite and the seven individual properties.

Historic Period Plan Preparation

The historic period plans included with the site physical history chapter of the CLR are each registered to the existing conditions base map prepared from the survey undertaken for this project. Topographic data from the existing conditions base map was not included on the period plans and was assumed to be relatively consistent throughout the time frame of the study. The historic period plans, which are hand-drawn, depict the physical evolution of the townsite—primarily the 161-acre quarter section—during four snapshots in time: 1) ca. 1879–1888; 2) ca. 1889–1930; 3) ca. 1945–1956; and 4) ca. 2002. They are presented at a consistent scale and configuration to afford like comparisons between the historical periods.

Very little primary source photographic or cartographic information exists to support the development of period plans for Nicodemus. Of the eleven historic periods identified as part of the site physical history, only four have been illustrated with period plans. These four period plans were based on the availability of source information. The graphic sources used to develop the period plans include the: 1999 topographic and aerial surveys by Forgy Surveying; 1983 HABS drawings of Nicodemus; historic aerial photographs; the historic townsite plat; county atlases; county highway maps; and historic ground photographs. Primary and secondary written sources and oral history transcripts were used to support development of the period plans; however, due to the difficulties inherent in definitively locating features described in oral histories and elsewhere, their general placement remains conjectural.

In some cases, contemporary site survey mapping indicates observable remnants of cultural uses, such as groves of trees or topographic anomalies. Those that appear to correspond to sites for buildings (including dugouts and sod dwellings) in the earlier historic periods have been used to guide their location in the period plans. Archeological investigation of surficial anomalies and of the predicted sites of former cultural features may be the best way to determine more about the physical evolution of the townsite.

A noticeable trend in the Nicodemus landscape is a tradition of relocating buildings from the township into town, and also the demolition and re-construction of buildings in the same location over time. It is important to recognize when using the period plans that a structure documented in the same location throughout different periods may not be the same structure, but rather a newer one built on the same site. Inventories of landscape features thought to have existed during each period are included with the period plans to help make sense of change over time. Each identified feature has been given a number on the plan. Not all inventoried features have been located on the period plans, however. Eventually, it may be possible, as the knowledge base about Nicodemus grows, to confirm the presence and location of conjectural features, but it also is highly likely that many uncertainties about the evolution of the townsite will remain.

Existing Conditions Documentation

CLR documentation of existing conditions at Nicodemus is provided through cross-referenced narrative, graphic, and photographic materials. This depiction of the landscape has been organized to accommodate the three levels of investigation called for in the project scope of work. An overview description of the environmental context and setting for Nicodemus precedes the descriptions of the individual areas, and provides a context. The descriptions are organized from most general to most specific; and from the Township-wide documentation, to the townsite documentation, and finally to the descriptions of the seven individual properties.

As recommended in National Register Bulletin 30: *Guidelines for Documenting and Evaluating Rural Historic Landscapes*, the existing conditions documentation is organized in accordance with the following landscape characteristics: responses to natural features and systems; patterns of spatial organization; boundary demarcations; land uses and infrastructure; vegetation; circulation; buildings, structures, and structural clusters; small-scale features and systems; utilities; cultural traditions; and potential archeological resources.

Existing conditions documentation has been prepared through the review and compilation of information derived from base mapping and aerial photography provided by Forgy Surveying, USGS quad mapping, state highway department mapping, various geologic maps, HABS mapping, field investigations, review of photographs taken in the field, examination of park planning documents, the Cultural Landscapes Inventory Forms prepared previously for the site by the NPS, and the Graham County soil survey. Base maps were prepared for each level of documentation, and inventories of existing landscape features were prepared to accompany the maps. Features that are known to have existed during earlier periods, but that are no longer extant and may currently constitute archeological resources, were also identified. These inventories form the basis for other sections of the CLR, including the comparative analysis of historic and existing conditions, condition and integrity assessments, and the lists of character-defining features.

Photographs of representative landscape features are included in the Existing Conditions chapter of this CLR. These are referenced in the text, and their photographic station points are indicated on a map included within the chapter. A documentation notebook and electronic file of all existing conditions photographs taken in support of this project, in conjunction with a base map indicating the locations of all views taken, will be provided to NPS at the end of the project.

Condition Assessment

The project team developed preliminary condition assessments for each inventoried landscape feature identified within the seven townsite properties using the following condition categories based on the guidance available in the *Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide*: Good, Fair, Poor, and Unknown. The definitions of these categories are as follows:

> Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions.
>
> Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.
>
> Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.
>
> Unknown: Not enough information is available to make an evaluation.

Evaluation of Significance

Information regarding the issue of significance is presented in Chapter IV of this CLR. It is based upon review of National Register Bulletins 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 30: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*, and 38: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, in addition to *How to Prepare National Historic Landmark Nominations*, and the guidance they provide regarding National Register-level evaluation of historic properties. The significance information, which is intended to supplement available significance evaluations included in previously prepared NPS planning documents, NHL and National Register nominations, and the GMP, has been reviewed by the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office. The CLR suggests that the period of significance extends to the present, which has profound implications for the team's approach to comparative analysis and treatment. It was important that this information be discussed by the entire project team and previewed by the Kansas SHPO during the preparation of the CLR. To further discuss the issue of significance, the project team met at the Midwest Regional Office of the NPS in Omaha, Nebraska, on July 30, 2001. During the meeting, the group agreed, in theory, to an expanded period of significance at a state or local level, with national significance attributed to Nicodemus's early settlement and boom period. A revised statement of significance for Nicodemus was subsequently provided to NPS and the Kansas SHPO for review. The comments received by OCULUS from the reviewers have been incorporated into the CLR.

Comparative Analysis of Historic and Existing Landscape Conditions

In order to better understand the existing landscape of Nicodemus as it has evolved since the nineteenth century, OCULUS prepared a comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions. For the most part, the analysis focused on extant resources and their dates of origin. Through the comparative analysis, landscape features and systems that are "character-defining," important to, and/or representative of the community were identified and described.

This kind of a comparative analysis typically is utilized in a CLR to understand which features survive from a site's period(s) of significance, establish the basis for an integrity assessment, and provide an understanding of the similarities and differences between historic and existing conditions that would contribute to the development of the treatment plan. In the case of Nicodemus, where the period of significance was determined to extend to the present, all ongoing uses are considered contributing and existing conditions cannot be compared against a definable historic period. Therefore, this analysis resulted in the identification and description of character-defining resources and characteristics rather than contributing and non-contributing resources.

Treatment Plan

Because the GMP for Nicodemus was not completed prior to the CLR, the project team identified the need to modify the structure of the treatment plan. In lieu of specific treatment recommendations and guidelines accompanied by implementation recommendations, the CLR includes a broadly-conceived plan for managing the historic site and its resources. The plan emphasizes the need for individual landowners and the Federal Government to collaborate in any management scenario. The plan is presented in the fifth chapter of the CLR. Entitled "A Guide for Managing Change," this chapter replaces four of the chapters called for in the scope of work—Chapter V - Management Issues; Chapter VI - Treatment Recommendations & Analysis of Alternatives; Chapter VII - Design Guidelines; and Chapter VIII - Implementation Recommendations. It draws from discussions with the NPS and local residents, as well as extensive research into the realm of economic tourism and heritage area models. A broadly-conceived approach to the management and interpretation of Nicodemus heritage is supported at the NHS site level with traditional treatment recommendations that are consistent with the direction provided in the draft GMP.

APPENDIX B

Population Statistics for Graham County, Nicodemus Township, and the Town of Nicodemus, Kansas

This appendix attempts to pull together data from a variety of sources to create a comprehensive index of population statistics for different jurisdiction levels. A majority of the figures were taken from primary records such as Federal Census population schedules and Annual Reports of the State Board of Agriculture. Where secondary records were used, each source is identified in an endnote.

YEAR	COUNTY	TOWNSHIP	TOWN
1877		2,621A	
1878	1,500	400 A / 600 B	
1879		496 A	
1880 (Feb.)	4,258 C	316 B / 452	260 A
1880 (June)		260	
1881		287 / 358 D	
1882	3,328 C	322	
1883		259	
1884		239 A B	<50 A B
1885		261 / 288	
1886		333	150 E A
1887		397	200 A B
1888		407	>400 B
1889		387	
1890		300 F / 317	
1891		284	
1892		302	
1893		328	
1894		322	
1895		307	
1896		313	
1897		322	
1898		309	
1899		297	
1900		278 / 300 A / 304 D	300
1901		332	
1902		366	
1903		343	
1904		375	
1905		300 A / 360	
1906		300 A / 417	200 A
1907		501	
1908		383	
1909		371	
1910		338 / 402 F / 409	<200 A
1911		361	
1912		401	
1913		348	
1914		357	
1915		299	
1916		459	

YEAR	COUNTY	TOWNSHIP	TOWN
1917		329	
1918		218	60 G
1919		244	
1920		213 / 249 / 271	
1921		279	
1922		288	
1923		285	
1924		298	
1925		267	
1926		291	
1927		232	
1928		305	
1929		290	
1930		230 / 296	
1931		321	
1932		326	40 A
1933		300 A / 335	
1934		344	
1935		321	
1936		308	
1937		293	
1938		244	
1939		262	
1940		206 / 249	
1950			16 A
1960			36 A
1978			100 A H
1980		22 A	54 A
1983			58 A
1993			58

APPENDIX C

Pre-European American Occupation and Settlement, ca. 10,000 B.C.–1540 A.D.

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Natural systems	10,000–1540	sandy banks of river		N1	pre-sett
Natural systems	10,000–1540	Solomon River		N2	pre-sett
Natural systems	10,000–1540	spring		N3	pre-sett
Natural systems	10,000–1540	Spring Creek		N4	pre-sett
Topography	10,000–1540	low bluffs		T1	pre-sett
Vegetation	10,000–1540	cane grass		V1	pre-sett
Vegetation	10,000–1540	prairie		V2	pre-sett
Vegetation	10,000–1540	scattered trees		V3	pre-sett
Land use	10,000–1540	Native Am. settlement		L1	

Contact Period, ca. 1540–1803

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Circulation	1540–1803	trails		C1	
Land use	1540–1803	fur trading		L2	
Land use	1540–1803	ranching		L3	
Natural systems	1540–1803	sandy banks of river		N1	pre-sett
Natural systems	1540–1803	Solomon River		N2	pre-sett
Natural systems	1540–1803	spring		N3	pre-sett
Natural systems	1540–1803	Spring Creek		N4	pre-sett
Topography	1540–1803	low bluffs		T1	pre-sett
Vegetation	1540–1803	cane grass		V1	pre-sett
Vegetation	1540–1803	prairie		V2	pre-sett
Vegetation	1540–1803	scattered trees		V3	pre-sett

Early American Occupation, ca. 1803–1854

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Circulation	1803–1854	trails		C1	
Natural systems	1803–1854	sandy banks of river		N1	pre-sett
Natural systems	1803–1854	Solomon River		N2	pre-sett
Natural systems	1803–1854	spring		N3	pre-sett
Natural systems	1803–1854	Spring Creek		N4	pre-sett
Topography	1803–1854	low bluffs		T1	pre-sett

Creation of Kansas Territory, the State of Kansas, and Graham County, 1854–1877

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Circulation	1854–1877	trails		C1	
Land use	1854–1877	ranching		L3	
Natural systems	1854–1877	sandy banks of river		N1	pre-sett
Natural systems	1854–1877	Solomon River		N2	pre-sett
Natural systems	1854–1877	spring		N3	pre-sett
Natural systems	1854–1877	Spring Creek		N4	pre-sett
Topography	1854–1877	low bluffs		T1	pre-sett
Small-scale feature	1854–1877	fence?		SS1	

The Establishment of the Nicodemus and the Arrival of the Colonies, 1877–1879

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout	"new baby"	B1	
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout	A.M.E. Church	B2	
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout	Baptist Church	B3	1879
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/church		B4	
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/hotel	Burley	B5	1879
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/hotel	Hall and McCabe	B6	1877
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/hotel	Myers	B7	1879
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/livery		B8	
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/residence	unknown	B9	
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/school		B10	
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/store	Fletcher	B11	1877
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/store	Smith	B12	
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/store	Welton	B13	
Building/Structure	1877–1879	dugout/store/post office	Fletcher	B14	1879
Building/Structure	1877–1879	stone house	Anderson	B15	1877
Building/Structure	1877–1879	stone house	Roundtree	B16	1877
Building/Structure	1877–1879	tents		B17	
Building/Structure	1877–1879	unidentified building		B18	
Building/Structure	1877–1879	unidentified dugout/sod-up		B19	
Circulation	1877–1879	surveyed street (dirt)		C2	
Cluster arrangement	1877–1879	Fairview		CA1	
Cluster arrangement	1877–1879	Mount Olive		CA2	
Land use	1877–1879	agriculture (animals-pasture)		L4	
Land use	1877–1879	agriculture (crops)		L5	
Land use	1877–1879	cemetery		L6	
Land use	1877–1879	improved land/hedgerow		L7	
Land use	1877–1879	ranching		L3	
Land use	1877–1879	temporary encampment		L8	
Natural systems	1877–1879	sandy banks of river		N1	pre-sett
Natural systems	1877–1879	Solomon River		N2	pre-sett
Natural systems	1877–1879	spring		N3	pre-sett
Natural systems	1877–1879	Spring Creek		N4	pre-sett
Response to Nat.	1877–1879	buffalo chips (fuel)		R1	
Response to Nat.	1877–1879	use of stone/sod for houses		R2	
Small-scale feature	1877–1879	fence		SS1	
Topography	1877–1879	low bluffs		T1	pre-sett
Vegetation	1877–1879	scattered trees		V3	pre-sett

The Boom Years: the Commercial Nicodemus, 1879–1888

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1879–1888	A.M.E. Church		B20	1885
Building/Structure	1879–1888	bank	McPherson	B21	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	barbershop	Wilson	B22	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	barn	Henry	B23	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	barn	Newth	B24	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	blacksmith shop	Scott	B25	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	blacksmith shop	Woofter	B27	1879
Building/Structure	1879–1888	blacksmith shop	Young	B26	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	building and barn	Sample	B28	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	butcher shop	Craig	B29	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	carpentry shop	Glazier	B30	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Douglass House Hotel	Boles	B31	1878
Building/Structure	1879–1888	drug store	Craig and Turner	B33	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	drug store	Newth	B32	1884
Building/Structure	1879–1888	dugout/sod-up	unknown	B34	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	farm building	Campbell	B35	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	farm implement store	Borin	B36	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	First Baptist Church		B37	1880
Building/Structure	1879–1888	frame building	Hawkins	B38	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	frame house	Newth	B39	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Free Methodist church		B40	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	furniture store	Duncalf	B41	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	general store	Green	B42	1880
Building/Structure	1879–1888	general store	Wilson	B43	1879
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Gibson House hotel	Smith	B44	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	grocery store	Weaver	B45	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	hardware store	Parrish	B46	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	hotel	Smith/Cayton	B47	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	joint stock store	Williamson	B48	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	livery	Taylor and Borin	B49	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	livery stable	Niles	B51	1880
Building/Structure	1879–1888	livery stable	Reese	B52	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	livery stable	Smith	B50	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	livery stable and corral	Fletcher	B53	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Masonic Hall, stone		B54	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	meat market	Greebles	B55	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	meat market	Groze/Loreo	B56	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	meat market/bakery	Duvall	B57	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	merchandise store	Fletcher	B58	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	merchandise store	Henry (Henries?)	B59	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	millinery shop	Warner/Fletcher/ Cotton	B60	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	District No. 1 Schoolhouse		B61	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	office, attorney	Jones	B63	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	office, attorney	Lawery	B62	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	office, attorney	Lowery/Lightfoot	B64	1888
Building/Structure	1879–1888	office/barber shop	Garland/ Williamson	B65	1886

Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Burkholder	B71	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Carpenter	B68	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Cotton	B67	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Craig	B72	1879
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Harper	B70	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Murphy	B66	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Riley	B69	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	restaurant "Blue Front"	Hawkins	B73	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	Rinehart and Co. drug store			B74
Building/Structure	1879–1888	shop, shoe repair	Moreland	B75	1884
Building/Structure	1879–1888	sod church		B76	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	St. Francis Hotel	Fletcher	B77	1880
Building/Structure	1879–1888	stock store	White	B78	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	stone house	Wilson	B79	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	store	Crowley	B80	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	store	Levin (Lewin?)	B81	1887
Building/Structure	1879–1888	store	Williams	B82	1886
Building/Structure	1879–1888	residence	Lacey	B108	
Building/Structure	1879–1888	grocery store	Williams	B208	by 1885
Circulation	1879–1888	trails		C1	
Circulation	1879–1888	Adams Avenue		C3	
Circulation	1879–1888	First Street		C4	
Circulation	1879–1888	Fourth Street		C5	
Circulation	1879–1888	Jackson Avenue		C6	
Circulation	1879–1888	Jefferson Avenue		C7	
Circulation	1879–1888	Madison Avenue		C8	
Circulation	1879–1888	minor roads		C9	
Circulation	1879–1888	Public Square		C10	
Circulation	1879–1888	Road		C14	
Circulation	1879–1888	Road N boundary		C11	
Circulation	1879–1888	Road NW corner of town		C12	
Circulation	1879–1888	Road W boundary		C13	
Circulation	1879–1888	Second Street		C15	
Circulation	1879–1888	Seventh Street		C16	
Circulation	1879–1888	South Street		C17	
Circulation	1879–1888	Third Street		C18	
Circulation	1879–1888	Washington Avenue		C19	
Circulation	1879–1888	Fifth Street		C20	
Cluster arrangement	1879–1888	Spring Creek community		CA3	
Constr. water feature	1879–1888	public well		W1	
Constr. water feature	1879–1888	well		W2	
Cultural traditions	1879–1888	Emancipation Celebration		CT1	
Cultural traditions	1879–1888	parade		CT2	
Land use	1879–1888	agriculture (animals-pasture)		L4	
Land use	1879–1888	agriculture (crops)		L5	
Land use	1879–1888	baseball field		L9	
Land use	1879–1888	cemetery		L6	
Land use	1879–1888	coal yard		L10	
Land use	1879–1888	fire breaks		L11	
Land use	1879–1888	stone quarry		L12	
Natural systems	1879–1888	sandy banks of river		N1	pre-sett
Natural systems	1879–1888	Solomon River		N2	pre-sett

Natural systems	1879–1888	spring	N3	pre-sett
Natural systems	1879–1888	Spring Creek	N4	pre-sett
Small-scale feature	1879–1888	fence	SS1	
Topography	1879–1888	low bluffs	T1	pre-sett
Vegetation	1879–1888	fruit trees	V4	
Vegetation	1879–1888	garden plots	V5	
Vegetation	1879–1888	Grand Arbor	V6	
Vegetation	1879–1888	scattered trees	V3	pre-sett
Vegetation	1879–1888	tree plantings in farms	V7	
Vegetation	1879–1888	tree plantings in town	V8	
Vegetation	1879–1888	trees along river	V9	pre-sett

Post Railroad Abandonment of Nicodemus: A Return to Agriculture, 1888–1930

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1888–1930	A.M.E. Church		B20	1885
Building/Structure	1888–1930	First Baptist Church		B37	1880
Building/Structure	1888–1930	store	Williamson	B48	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	Masonic Hall		B54	1886
Building/Structure	1888–1930	District No. 1 Schoolhouse		B61	1887
Building/Structure	1888–1930	St. Francis Hotel, residence	Switzer	B77	1880
Building/Structure	1888–1930	animal pens		B83	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	barn		B84	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	barn	Stewart/Goins	B85	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	cafe	Bates	B86	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	dugout	Mathew	B87	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	exterior cellars		B88	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	granary and pens	Sayers	B89	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	grocery store	Sayers	B90	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	house complex	Riley	B91	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	mercantile store		B92	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	mercantile store		B93	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	old AME Church ruin		B94	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	parsonage, First Baptist		B95	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	recreation hall	Riley	B97	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Scruggs	B98	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Wilson	B99	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Baxter	B100	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Williams	B101	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Scott	B102	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Stewart/Goins	B103	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Craig	B104	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Lacey	B105	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Napue	B106	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Sayers	B107	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Lacey	B108	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Reverend Smith	B109	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Smith	B110	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Buckner	B111	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Thomas	B112	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Vaughn	B113	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Robinson	B114	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence and cafe	Switzer	B115	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residences		B116	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	restaurant	White	B117	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	restaurant	Riley	B118	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	restaurant	Lee	B119	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	residence	Lacey	B156	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	service station and cabins		B120	
Building/Structure	1888–1930	grocery store	Williams	B208	
Circulation	1888–1930	trails		C1	
Circulation	1888–1930	Adams Avenue		C3	
Circulation	1888–1930	First Street		C4	

Circulation	1888–1930	Fourth Street	C5	
Circulation	1888–1930	Jackson Avenue	C6	
Circulation	1888–1930	Madison Avenue	C8	
Circulation	1888–1930	Seventh Street	C16	
Circulation	1888–1930	South Street	C17	
Circulation	1888–1930	Third Street	C18	
Circulation	1888–1930	Washington Avenue	C19	
Circulation	1888–1930	Fifth Street	C20	
Constr. water feature	1888–1930	well	W2	
Constr. water feature	1888–1930	cistern	W3	
Constr. water feature	1888–1930	irrigation	W4	
Vegetation	1888–1930	tree cover at Mathew dugout site	V3	pre-sett

Decline of the Nicodemus Community: the Dust Bowl, 1930–1945

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1930–1945	A.M.E. Church, stone		B20	1885
Building/Structure	1930–1945	First Baptist Church		B37	1880
Building/Structure	1930–1945	Masonic Hall		B54	1886
Building/Structure	1930–1945	District No. 1 Schoolhouse		B61	1887
Building/Structure	1930–1945	St. Francis Hotel		B77	
Building/Structure	1930–1945	Priscilla Art Club		B96	
Building/Structure	1930–1945	Blow-in cafe		B121	
Building/Structure	1930–1945	cattle barn	Sayers	B122	
Building/Structure	1930–1945	dance pavilion		B123	
Building/Structure	1930–1945	dugout		B124	
Building/Structure	1930–1945	Nicodemus Township Hall		B125	1937
Building/Structure	1930–1945	store	Sayers	B126	
Circulation	1930–1945	trails		C1	
Circulation	1930–1945	Adams Avenue		C3	
Circulation	1930–1945	First Street		C4	
Circulation	1930–1945	Fourth Street		C5	
Circulation	1930–1945	Highway 24		C21	
Circulation	1930–1945	Jackson Avenue		C6	
Circulation	1930–1945	Madison Avenue		C8	
Circulation	1930–1945	roads		C14	
Circulation	1930–1945	Second Street		C15	
Circulation	1930–1945	Seventh Street		C16	
Circulation	1930–1945	South Street		C17	
Circulation	1930–1945	Third Street		C18	
Circulation	1930–1945	Washington Avenue		C19	
Circulation	1930–1945	Fifth Street		C20	
Cultural traditions	1930–1945	Emancipation Celebration		CT1	
Constr. water feature	1930–1945	well		W2	
Land use	1930–1945	agriculture (animals-pasture)		L4	
Land use	1930–1945	agriculture (crops)		L5	
Land use	1930–1945	cemetery		L6	
Land use	1930–1945	baseball field		L9	
Land use	1930–1945	baseball backstop and stands		L13	
Land use	1930–1945	baseball diamond (makeshift)		L14	
Land use	1930–1945	picnic grounds		L15	
Natural systems	1930–1945	sandy banks of river		N1	pre-sett
Natural systems	1930–1945	Solomon River		N2	pre-sett
Natural systems	1930–1945	spring		N3	pre-sett
Natural systems	1930–1945	Spring Creek		N4	pre-sett
Small-scale feature	1930–1945	fence		SS1	
Small-scale features	1930–1945	animal pen		SS8	
Small-scale features	1930–1945	gas pump	Sayers	SS9	
Small-scale features	1930–1945	granary		SS10	
Small-scale features	1930–1945	oil well		SS11	
Topography	1930–1945	low bluffs		T1	pre-sett
Topography	1930–1945	coal mine pits		T2	
Vegetation	1930–1945	grove/apricot trees		V12	
Vegetation	1930–1945	prairie		V2	pre-sett
Vegetation	1930–1945	scattered trees		V3	pre-sett

Nicodemus as a Social and Cultural Center, 1945–1956

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1945–1956	A.M.E. church, stone		B20	1885
Building/Structure	1945–1956	First Baptist Church		B37	1880
Building/Structure	1945–1956	joint stock store	Williamson	B48	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Masonic Hall		B54	1886
Building/Structure	1945–1956	District No. 1 Schoolhouse		B61	1887
Building/Structure	1945–1956	St. Francis Hotel		B77	1880
Building/Structure	1945–1956	general store	Sayers	B90	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Priscilla Art Club		B96	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Williams	B101	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Napue	B106	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Sayers	B107	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence ruin	Lacey	B108	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence ruin	Rev. Smith	B109	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Vaughn	B113	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	restaurant	Riley	B118	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Blow-In café		B121	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Nicodemus Township Hall		B125	1937
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Cracker Box school		B127	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Fairview Schoolhouse		B128	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	First Baptist parsonage		B129	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	granary and pens	Sayers	B130	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Methodist parsonage	Baxter	B131	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	mill	Wilson	B132	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	old A.M.E. church ruin		B133	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	Post Office	Wilson	B134	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Bronson	B135	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Riley	B136	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Rev. Smith	B137	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Williams	B138	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Robinson	B139	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Napue	B140	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Goins/Robinson	B141	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Bronson	B142	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Switzer	B143	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Scruggs	B144	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Moore	B145	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Sayers	B146	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Moore	B147	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Vaughn	B148	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Lacey	B150	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence	Scruggs	B151	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence complex	Bates	B152	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence complex	Bates	B153	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence complex	Switzer	B154	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence ruin	Napue	B155	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	residence ruin	Lacey	B156	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	District No. 33 Schoolhouse		B157	
Building/Structure	1945–1956	store	Sayers	B158	

Circulation	1945–1956	trails		C1	
Circulation	1945–1956	Adams Avenue		C3	
Circulation	1945–1956	First Street		C4	
Circulation	1945–1956	Fourth Street		C5	
Circulation	1945–1956	Jackson Avenue		C6	
Circulation	1945–1956	Madison Avenue		C8	
Circulation	1945–1956	roads		C14	
Circulation	1945–1956	Second Street		C15	
Circulation	1945–1956	Seventh Street		C16	
Circulation	1945–1956	South Street		C17	
Circulation	1945–1956	Third Street		C18	
Circulation	1945–1956	Washington Avenue		C19	
Circulation	1945–1956	Fifth Street		C20	
Circulation	1945–1956	Highway 24		C21	
Cultural traditions	1945–1956	Emancipation Celebration/Homecoming		CT1	
Land Use	1945–1956	cemetery		L6	
Small-scale feature	1945–1956	fence		SS1	
Small-scale feature	1945–1956	electric poles and wires		SS2	
Small-scale feature	1945–1956	wind mill	Bates	SS3	
Vegetation	1945–1956	tree cover Mathew Dugout site		V3	pre-sett

Deterioration of the Physical Fabric of Nicodemus, 1956–1972

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1956–1972	A.M.E. Church, stone		B20	1885
Building/Structure	1956–1972	First Baptist Church		B37	1880
Building/Structure	1956–1972	District No. 1 Schoolhouse		B61	1887
Building/Structure	1956–1972	St. Francis Hotel		B77	1880
Building/Structure	1956–1972	Nicodemus Township Hall		B125	1937
Building/Structure	1956–1972	Fairview Schoolhouse		B128	
Building/Structure	1956–1972	Nevins Restaurant		B159	
Building/Structure	1956–1972	residences		B160	
Circulation	1956–1972	trails		C1	
Circulation	1956–1972	Adams Avenue		C3	
Circulation	1956–1972	First Street		C4	
Circulation	1956–1972	Fourth Street		C5	
Circulation	1956–1972	Jackson Avenue		C6	
Circulation	1956–1972	Madison Avenue		C8	
Circulation	1956–1972	roads		C14	
Circulation	1956–1972	Second Street		C15	
Circulation	1956–1972	Seventh Street		C16	
Circulation	1956–1972	South Street		C17	
Circulation	1956–1972	Third Street		C18	
Circulation	1956–1972	Washington Avenue		C19	
Circulation	1956–1972	Fifth Street		C20	
Circulation	1956–1972	Highway 24		C21	
Constr. water feature	1956–1972	well		W2	
Cultural traditions	1956–1972	Homecoming		CT3	
Land use	1956–1972	agriculture (animals-pasture)		L4	
Land use	1956–1972	agriculture (crops)		L5	
Land use	1956–1972	cemetery		L6	
Land use	1956–1972	baseball field		L9	
Land use	1956–1972	roadside park		L16	
Small-scale feature	1956–1972	fence		SS1	
Small-scale feature	1956–1972	historic marker		SS4	
Small-scale feature	1956–1972	Marker		SS5	
Vegetation	1956–1972	tree cover at Mathew Dugout site		V3	pre-sett

Resettlement of Nicodemus and Development as a National Historic Site, 1972–2002

FEATURE CATEGORY	PERIOD	FEATURE	OWNER	FEAT. #	ORIGIN
Building/Structure	1972–2002	A.M.E. Church, stone		B20	1885
Building/Structure	1972–2002	First Baptist Church		B37	1880
Building/Structure	1972–2002	District No. 1 Schoolhouse		B61	1887
Building/Structure	1972–2002	St. Francis Hotel		B77	1880
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Priscilla Art Club		B96	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Napue	B106	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Sayers	B107	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Vaughn	B113	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Nicodemus Township Hall		B125	1937
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Cracker Box school		B127	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Fairview School/vacant		B128	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	First Baptist Parsonage		B129	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Napue	B140	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence-ruin	Goins/Robinson	B141	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Jerry Scruggs	B144	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Community center at Villa		B161	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Ernestine's Bar-B-Q	VanDuvall	B162	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	fire station		B163	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	municipal fire house		B164	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	municipal garage		B165	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	new First Baptist church		B166	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Robinson	B167	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Bates	B168	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Sayers	B169	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Napue	B171	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Sayers	B172	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Robinson, Sr.	B173	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Robinson	B174	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Burney	B176	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Napue	B177	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Terry	B170	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Wellington	B175	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Wilson	B178	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Stokes	B179	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence duplex	VanDuvall	B180	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Bates	B181	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Switzer	B182	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Alexander	B183	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Moore	B184	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Switzer	B185	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Carter	B186	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Moore	B187	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/complex	Redd	B188	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/vacant	Scruggs	B190	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/vacant	Vaughn	B191	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence/vacant	Williams	B192	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence-vacant	Williams	B195	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	restaurant-vacant	Nevins	B196	

Building/Structure	1972–2002	residence	Stewart-Groins	B197	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	trailer	Grogden	B198	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	trailer	Switzer	B199	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	trailer	Robinson	B200	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	trailer/vacant	Switzer	B201	
Building/Structure	1972–2002	Villa (HUD housing)		B202	
Circulation	1972–2002	trails		C1	
Circulation	1972–2002	Adams Avenue		C3	
Circulation	1972–2002	First Street		C4	
Circulation	1972–2002	Fourth Street		C5	
Circulation	1972–2002	Jackson Avenue		C6	
Circulation	1972–2002	Madison Avenue		C8	
Circulation	1972–2002	road		C14	
Circulation	1972–2002	Second Street		C15	
Circulation	1972–2002	Seventh Street		C16	
Circulation	1972–2002	South Street		C17	
Circulation	1972–2002	Third Street		C18	
Circulation	1972–2002	Washington Avenue		C19	
Circulation	1972–2002	sidewalks		C23	
Constr. water feature	1972–2002	water tower		W5	
Constr. water feature	1972–2002	well		W2	
Cultural traditions	1972–2002	Homecoming		CT4	
Land use	1972–2002	agriculture (animals-pasture)		L4	
Land use	1972–2002	agriculture (crops)		L5	
Land use	1972–2002	cemetery		L6	
Land use	1972–2002	baseball field		L9	
Land use	1972–2002	grill		L17	
Land use	1972–2002	municipal sewage lagoon		L18	
Land use	1972–2002	playground		L19	
Land use	1972–2002	tennis and basketball courts		L20	
Small-scale feature	1972–2002	fence		SS1	
Small-scale feature	1972–2002	Nat. Hist. Landmark marker		SS6	
Small-scale feature	1972–2002	NPS sign		SS7	
Vegetation	1972–2002	tree cover at Mathew Dugout site		V3	pre-sett