



Flowering of Nicodemus

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Long Range Interpretive Planning Workshop

From March 10 through 12 Nicodemus National Historic Site hosted a Long Range Interpretive Planning Workshop at the Visitor Center / Township Hall. All signs indicate it was extremely successful. Many thanks go to Toni Dufficy (NPS, Harper's Ferry Center) who served as facilitator of the event and everyone who took time out of their busy lives to contribute to the Workshop.

The Long Range Interpretive Plan (L-RIP) is the guiding document for planning and implementing visitor experiences, storytelling and education at Nicodemus. It's life-span is about five to ten years, but may be usable for up to twenty years. While it is technically a National Park Service document, it also respects the realities of the community of Nicodemus and relies greatly on the participation of the Nicodemus community, its support organizations and its citizens and descendants, to help shape it and help implement it.

All descendants and others on our mailing list were notified about the workshop and invited to participate. Given that many do not live in the immediate area, we also held an on-line Open House, and invited questions and comments to be sent to the park via e-mail. We were

thrilled with the number of people who participated in the 3-day workshop: 15 descendants and community residents; 7 representatives of local, and state organizations and 10 National Park Service representatives were in attendance.

The Workshop culminated with "Actions and Recommendations" where we identified not only the stories that are currently being told, but those stories that still need to be told or told better. We looked at it from the perspective of the visitor and the time frame that he/she/they spend in Nicodemus. Teams were formed to identify what stories could be told within that time frame. Then we prioritized which stories were the most important to be told. Lastly, we began to explore who in the broad Nicodemus community is most interested or best able to tell the stories, but we ran out of time. We will continue these discussions at our monthly coffees at the Visitor Center / Township Hall. The next one is scheduled for Friday April 10, 2009.

We anticipate a draft plan will be ready in late spring or early summer. The final text will be complete in the fall and the final graphic/printed report available by the end of the year. If you have any questions or comments, contact me at 785-839-4321 or mark_weaver@nps.gov.



PARK NEWS

Are YOU on Our Mailing List?

Our Nicodemus NHS mailing list is used strictly for National Park Service communication purposes. Ideally it should have the name, address and email of everyone interested in the history of Nicodemus- especially descendants- but recent conversations with local residents suggest otherwise. Generally, the mailing list is utilized to let people know about special events, employment opportunities or general updates such as this newsletter. PLEASE, let friends and family know about the mailing list and urge them to sign up. Contact Mark Weaver at 785-839-4321 or email him at mark_weaver@nps.gov.

On the Burner.....

In June of this year, Nicodemus NHS will participate in a Core Operations (Core Ops) review. Traditionally, this process helps a park identify what its optimal operations would look like- how many staff would best serve the park and the funding necessary to support it, and its “bare bones” staffing and funding needs as well. Given that Nicodemus is currently operating at a more-or-less bare bones status now, the “Core Ops” will serve to help the park identify its optimal condition. This exercise helps set the stage for future action.

The 1879 Census

In 1879 Nicodemus and present-day Graham County were part of Rooks County . That year, a special census was taken to see if the area had reached a critical mass to warrant splitting into two counties. Park Guide Michelle Huff is doing some basic research to identify some of the people who were recorded as residents at that time. If you are interested in this work or have information that could contribute to her research, give Michelle a call at 785- 839-4233 or email: michelle_huff@nps.gov.

I, Too, Am America: Untold Stories / Student Narratives Contest

Each of us has our own story of our heritage, experiences and ideals that contribute to the story of America. The National Parks of Kansas is asking seventh and eighth grade students from across the state to tell their own stories of personal experiences, family sagas or community histories and explore how their own stories connect with the stories preserved at the National Parks of Kansas. For more information visit www.nps.gov/nico or contact Mark Weaver at 785-839-4321.

NEWS ABOUT TOWN

Ora Switzer turns 106

Ora Switzer celebrated her 106th birthday on Feb. 21, 2009. Many, many friends and family drove from far and near to offer her their best wishes at a reception held at Cowboy Junction in Hill City. It truly was a delightful time that everyone enjoyed. Congratulations, Ms. Switzer!



Township by Sharyn Dowdell

The township board has confirmed that the inmate crew from Norton will be doing a couple of projects for us this spring: some work at our two cemeteries and finishing up the renovation of the playground. It will be nice to see them finally completed. Contact Sharyn Dowdell for more information

Homecoming by Sharyn Dowdell

The homecoming planning group continues to meet each month and plans are progressing at a decent rate. It would be such a boast to have some outside input into the planning of this event. We seem to beg each year for descendants to participate in the planning and execution of YOUR event. One thing we are adding this year is a forum which will be named ‘The Year Homecoming Didn’t Happen’. Contact Sharyn Dowdell for more information.

Nicodemus Historical Society by Angela Bates

Our new website is up: www.nicodemushistoricalsociety.com . We encourage everyone to check it out and register their family trees by downloading the form on the genealogy page. Newsletters will also be online from now on and if someone wants a printed copy please let us know. THANKS! Contact Angela Bates for more information.

DID YOU KNOW?

Booker T. Washington National Monument

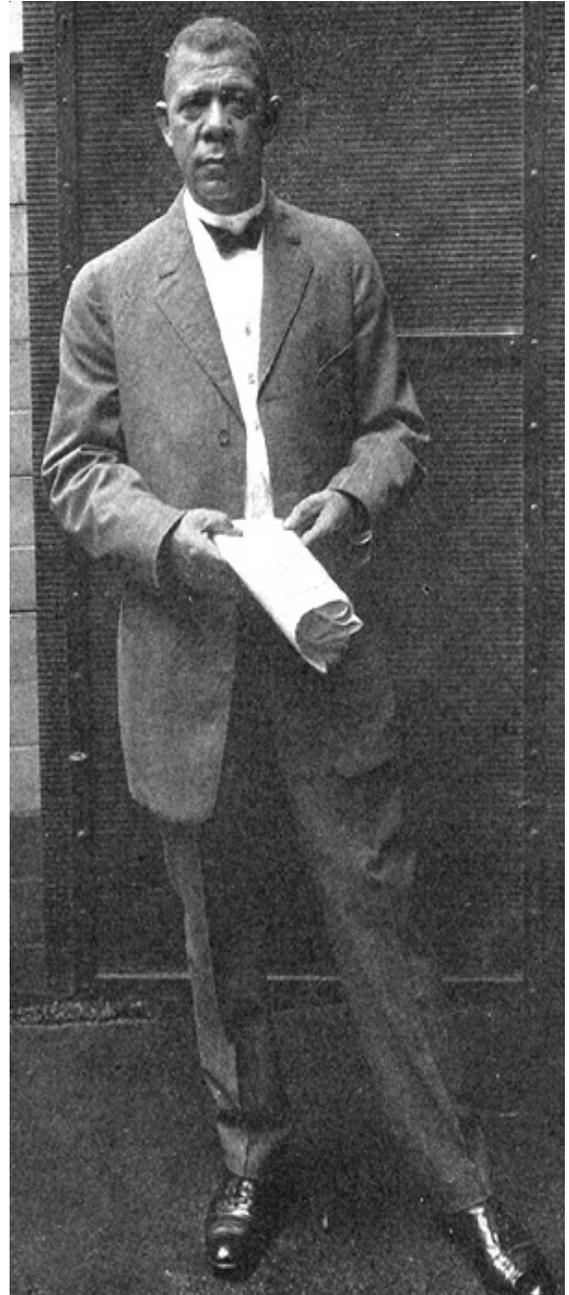
...from www.nps.gov/bowa

“I was born a slave on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia. I am not quite sure of the exact place or exact date of my birth, but at any rate I suspect I must have been born somewhere and at some time.”

Booker T. Washington NM commemorates the birthplace of America’s most prominent African American educator and orator of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The property evokes an 1850s middle class tobacco farm, representative of Booker T. Washington’s enslaved childhood at the Burroughs farm. He was born in 1856 to the Burroughses’ cook, Jane and lived on the farm throughout the Civil War. Compared to their Franklin County neighbors, the Burroughses were an upper middle class family evidenced by their combined slave and land holdings. They produced tobacco as a cash crop and grew other subsistence crops like flax, potatoes, and grains for family sustenance. Washington lived in the farm’s one-room kitchen cabin with his mother and two half siblings. As a small child he brought water to the men in the fields, carried the Burroughses’ daughters books to school, and transported grain to the local mill.

The Civil War interrupted the routine on the Burroughs farm, when all of the sons left to fight for the Confederacy. James Burroughs, the father and master of the farm died in 1861, leaving the supervision of daily farm activities to the Burroughs women. Shortages of luxury goods and certain food items were common during the war years. Washington recalled that the white people suffered from the lack of products they were accustomed to. However, the war did more than create shortages and hard economic times. Only two of the Burroughs sons survived the war physically unscathed.

With the southern defeat in 1865, the Emancipation Proclamation issued in 1863 was enforced to free southern slaves. Washington remembered listening to a Union soldier read the document on the porch of the Burroughs house. After receiving the joyous news, his mother Jane took her three children to West Virginia to be reunited with her husband who worked there in the salt mines.



Did you know there are twenty National Park units formally recognized by the National Park Foundation through its African American Experience Fund (AAEF)? Find out more at aaexperience.org.



For more information about Booker T. Washington National Monument go to: www.nps.gov/bowa.



National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

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

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Federal Job Announcements

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