

PHOTO: HILL CITY\SOLOMON  
RIVER.

PHOTO: TRESTLES.

PHOTO: NICODEMUS.

PHOTO: BOGUE.

PHOTO: BLACK TOWNS-  
MOUND BAYOU, MISS.  
LANGSTON & BOLEY, OK.

The reason the railroad bypassed Nicodemus, most likely involved the fact that the railroad needed to reach the county seat of Hill City just North of the Solomon River. Going through Nicodemus would have required the railroad to cross the river twice in order to reach Hill City from Nicodemus. This would have meant building two trestles across the river, to say nothing of the additional cost in laying track and acquiring land for a right-of-way.

Without the railroad Nicodemus began a steady decline. Many merchants moved from Nicodemus to Bogue, a former railroad camp, six miles away on the Union Pacific line. Some even took their wood buildings with them.

Nicodemus was only one of a number of black towns in the west during this time. There were six others in Kansas alone. However, these other towns died as a result of the railroad bypassing them. Nicodemus struggled to survive without the railroad and succeeded. Nicodemus remained small and relatively poor, but it survived.