

ST. FRANCIS HOTEL

The Saint Francis Hotel (now referred to as the Fletcher-Switzer residence). Zach Fletcher's 1881 hotel is the two-story stuccoed portion to the right and originally featured a cut limestone appearance with a one-story stone kitchen addition on the east. This historic structure has received numerous alterations and additions over the years, but remains as one of the oldest extant historic buildings in Nicodemus today.



SAYERS GENERAL STORE

Samuel G. Wilson, one of the first early white emigrants in Nicodemus, operated this general store in 1880. The modest store building was considered the "handsomest in Graham County" at that time. The business was subsequently acquired by H.S. Henrie and later purchased by W. L. Sayers, prominent black attorney. The structure was demolished in 1981.



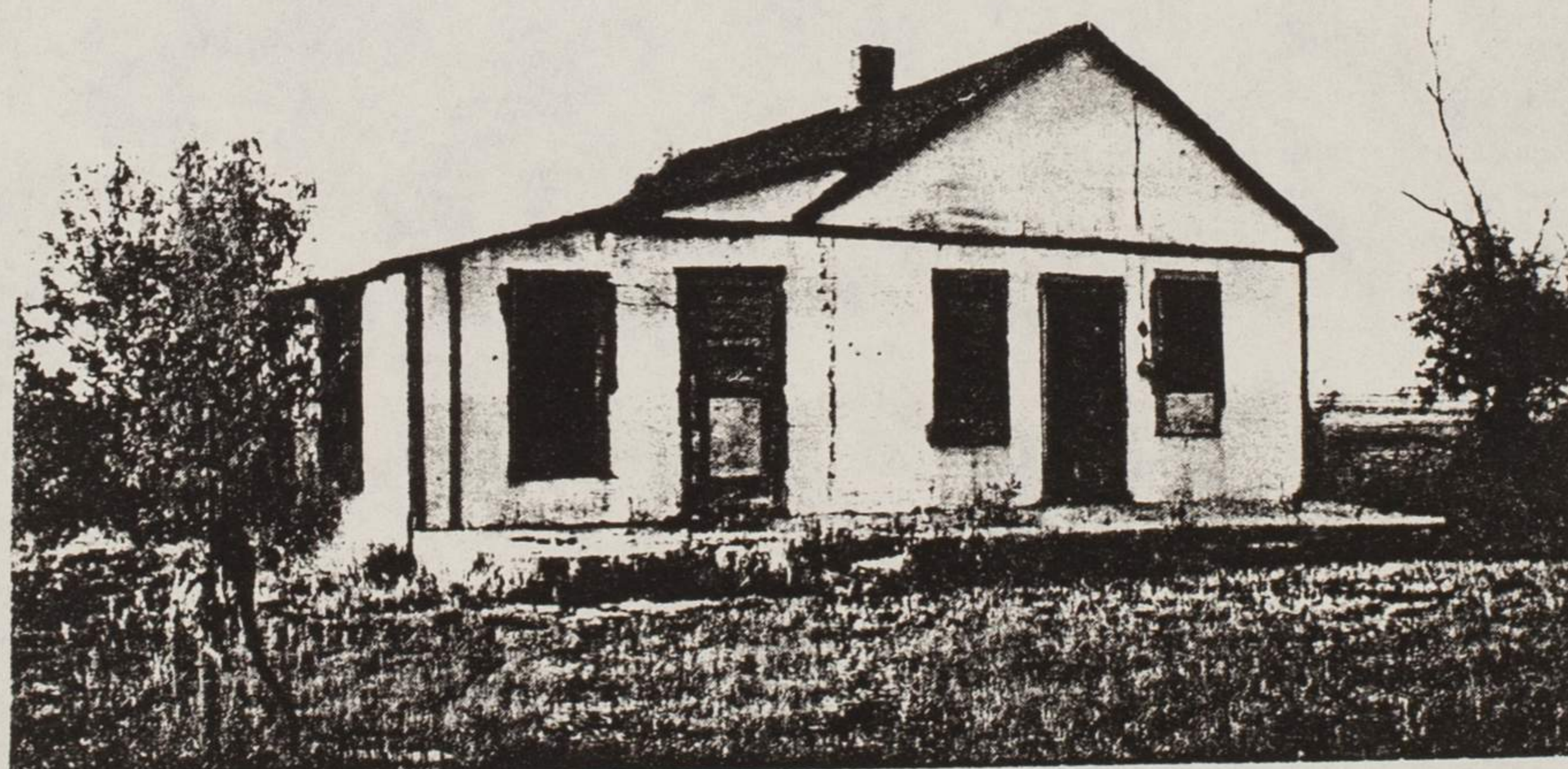
NICODEMUS SCHOOL

District No. 1 Nicodemus School, is a one-story, wood sided structure with a hipped roof. It was built in 1918 on the same site of the original school, (built around 1887) which burned. The school closed in 1955 and since then the Nicodemus children have commuted to Bogue. In 1983 the American Legion purchased the building for meetings and gatherings. Nicodemus was the first community to established a school in Graham County.



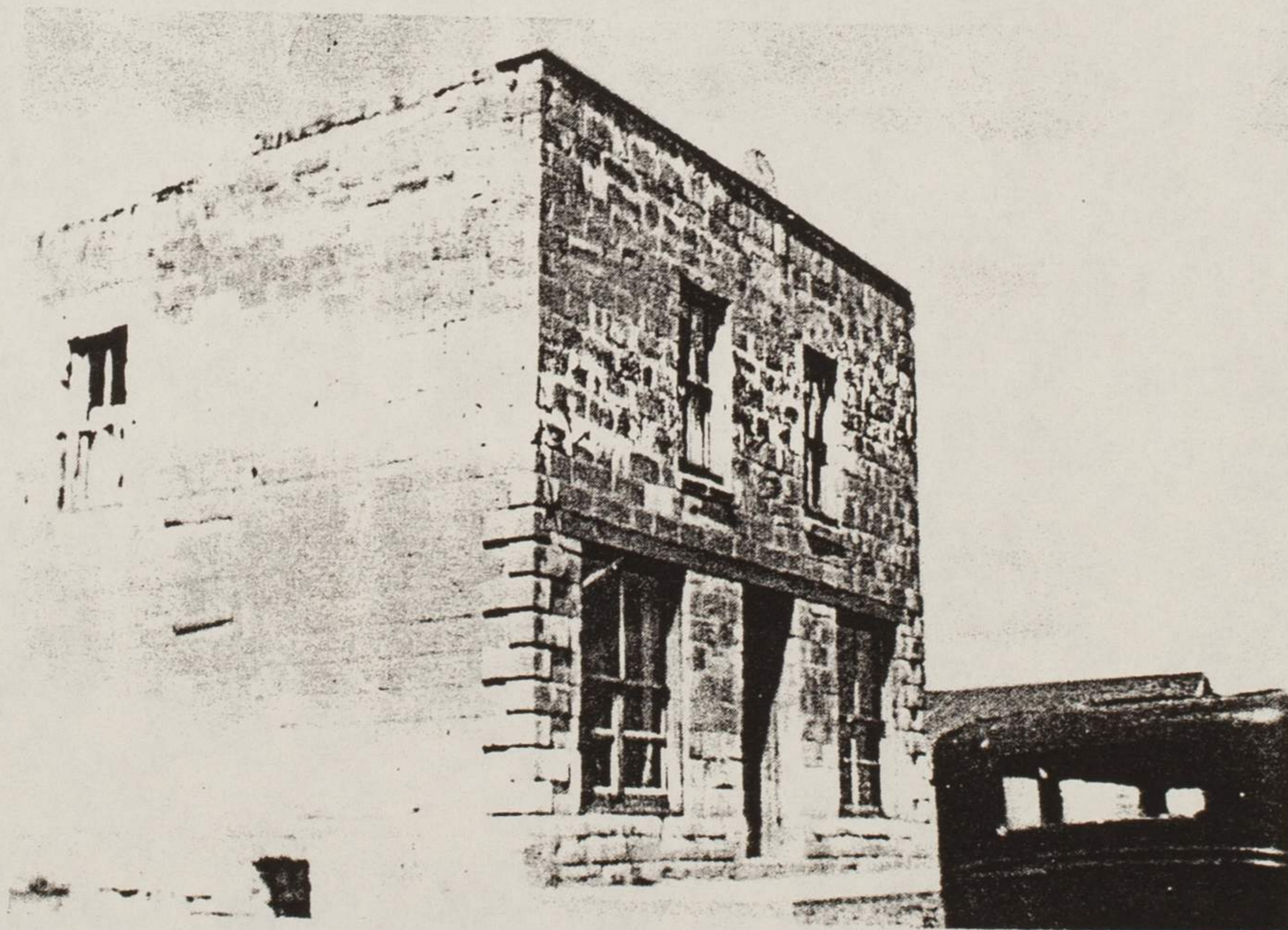
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

The First Baptist Church shows the structure after a 1930s windstorm blew off the original bell tower. Local tradition has it that the present structure, which was completed in 1907, was built around an earlier and smaller church. After the exterior of the present building was completed, the older structure was removed piece by piece through the front door.



THE CHARLES WILLIAMS HOUSE

The Charles Williams house. A typically modest residential structure in Nicodemus. The gable-end portion dates to the pre-1920s, and the lean-to addition was added in the 1930s. Like a number of wood frame structures in Nicodemus, the building has been stuccoed with a plaster mixture of cement, water, sand, and hog hair. The northeast room of the house was operated as a post office by Elizabeth Williams in the 1930s.



THE MASONIC HALL

Masonic Hall (built ca. 1880) was photographed in 1943. This cut limestone structure housed membership functions for the Masons and its affiliated women's group, Eastern Star. Located at the corner of Washington and Third streets, the building was used for ice cream socials and dances in the 1920s and 1930s, until the larger Township Hall was completed in 1939.



THE A. M. E. CHURCH

The A. M. E. Church (African Methodist Episcopal) built in 1885, reveals the stark character of this isolated frontier town. This limestone structure was later finished with stucco in the 1940s.



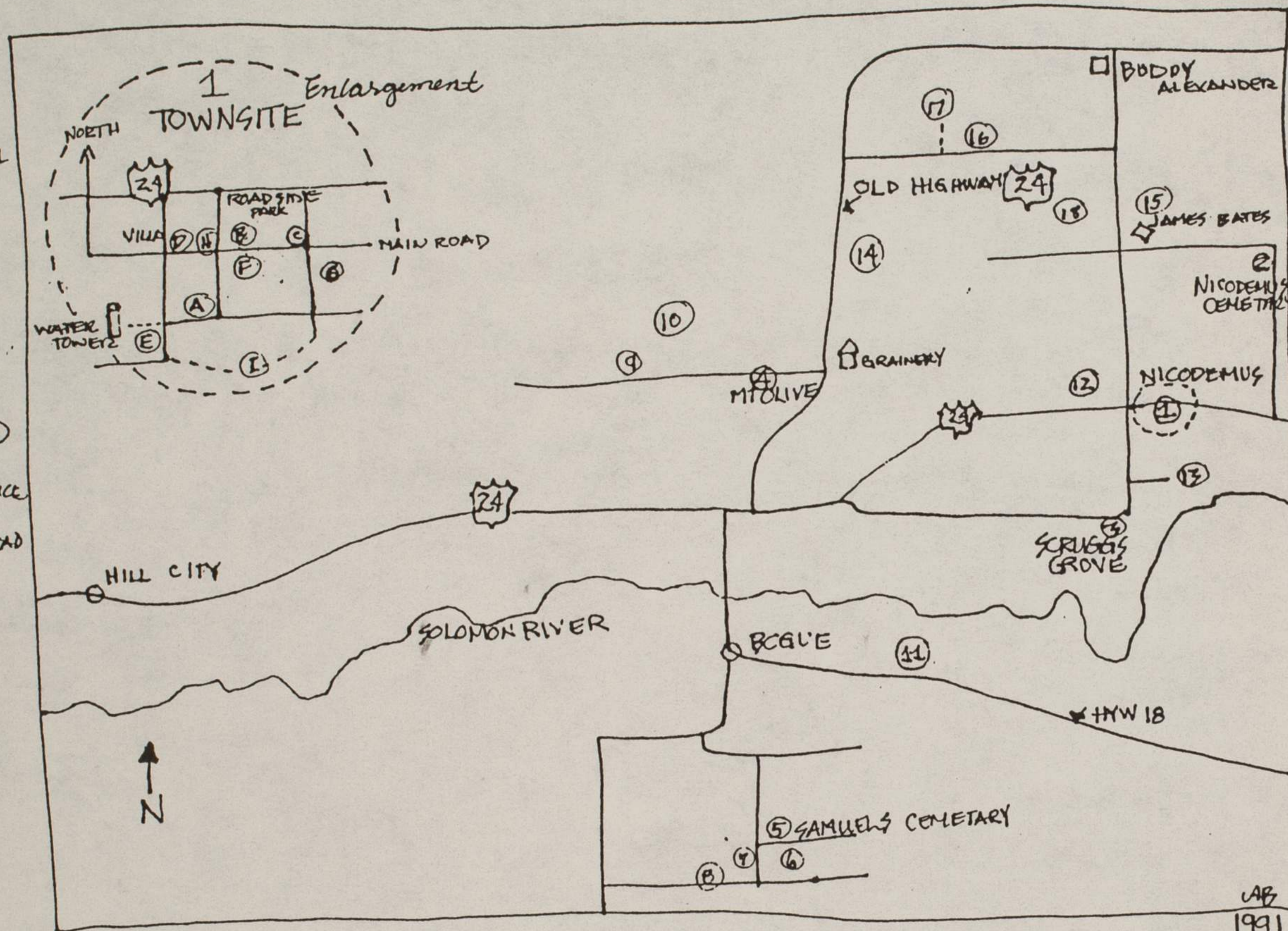
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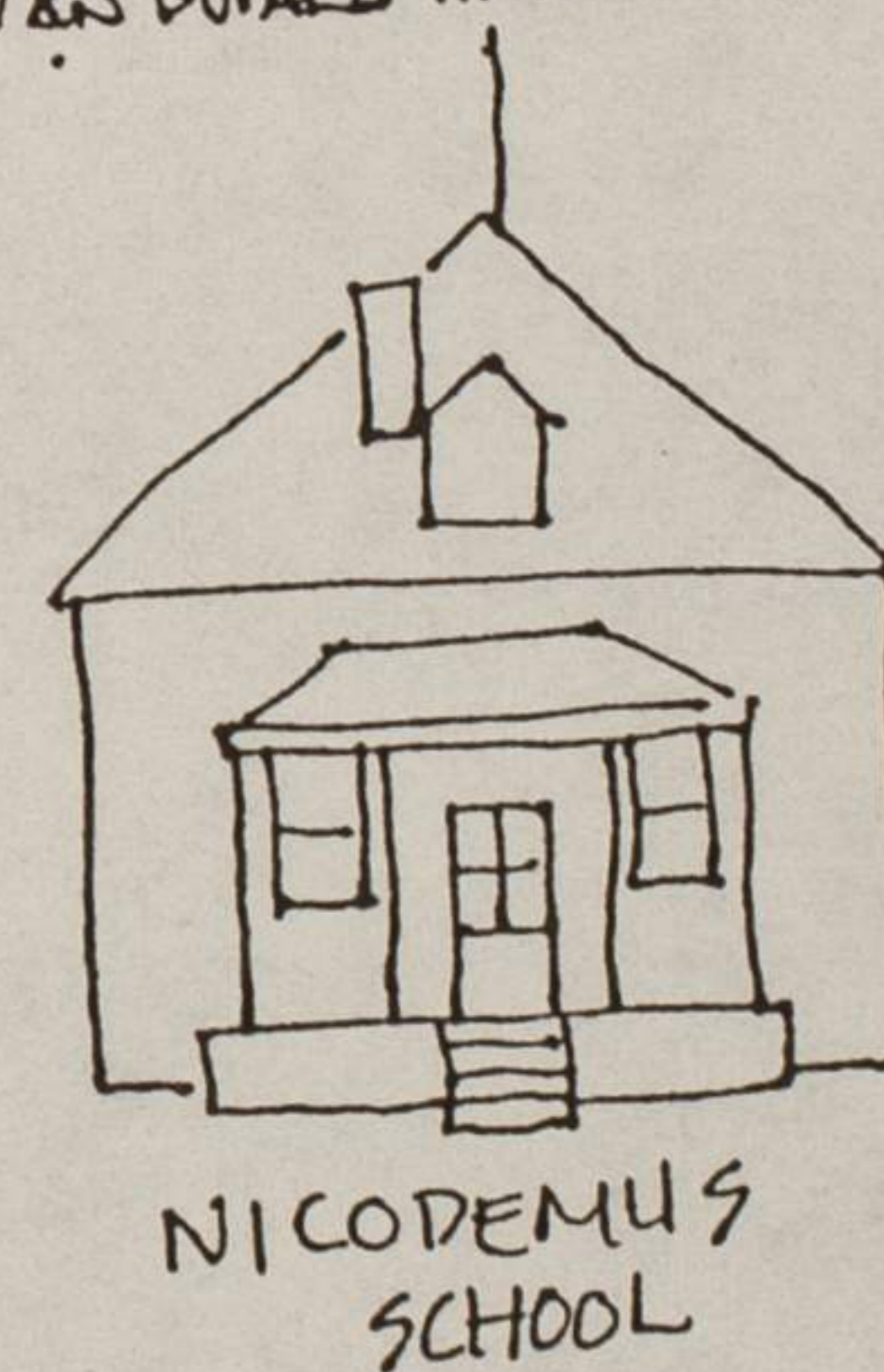
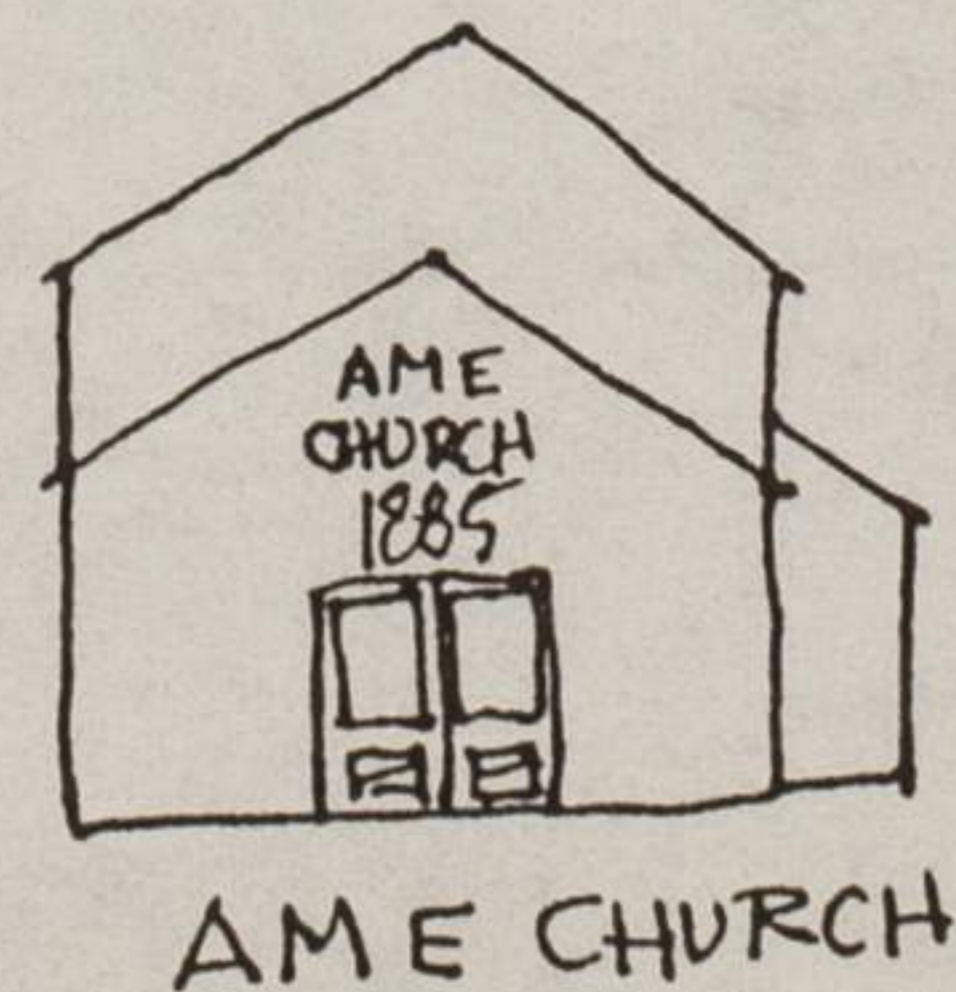
TOWN SITE

- A. AME CHURCH
- B. SITE OF OLD MASONIC HALL
- C. TOWNSHIP HALL
- D. 1ST BAPTIST CHURCH
- E. NICODEMUS SCHOOL
- F. Z.T. FLETCHER HOTEL (WEST END OF BLDG ONLY)
- G. STONE RESIDENCE OF JERRY SCRUGGS (RUINS)
- H. SITE WHERE SAYER'S GENERAL STORE & POST OFFICE STOOD.
- I. CLEMENTINE VAUGHN HOMESTEAD



- 1. TOWN SITE
- 2. NICODEMUS CEMETARY
- 3. SCRUGGS GROVE/SITE OF OLD EMANCIPATION CELEBRATIONS
- 4. MT. OLIVE CEMETARY
- 5. SAMUELS CEMETARY
- 6. NAPUE HOMESTEAD FARM
- 7. CAUSEY NAPUE OLD FARM (RUINS)
- 8. DABNEY HOMESTEAD FARM (RUINS)
- 9. MT. OLIVE SCHOOL (RUINS)
- 10. PERRY BATES' HOMESTEAD FARM (RUINS)
- 11. ALEXANDER HOMESTEAD FARM
- 12. MOORE HOMESTEAD FARM (RUINS)
- 13. OLA WILSON HOMESTEAD (RUINS)
- 14. MARI & WARREN WHITE OLD FARM
- 15. MATTIE & CASS BIBBS OLD FARM
- 16. BERNICE & HARRY BATES OLD HOME (RUINS)
- 17. HENRY WILLIAMS' HOME (RUINS)
- 18. VANDUVAL HOMESTEAD (RUINS)

TOUR MAP



The First Xmas

The idea of the Christmas Tree was brought to Nicodemus in the 1880's. The first one was put up in the Baptist Church the Christmas of 1882. Grant Harris, Henry Johnson, and Beverly Herrin, Deacons brought the tree a cottonwood about six or eight feet tall. The ladies of the church trimmed it. The branches were wrapped with cotton batting. It was placed upright in a small barrel that was covered with a sheet. Bright colors of tissue paper struck here and there on its gave a festive look. The star was made of tin foil taken from tobacco. There was a great number of presents on the tree, both pretty and expensive. Miss Betty Kirtley and Miss Sally Moore each received silver ware. Mrs. Jenny Fletcher, gold ear rings and a dress pin. There were various articles such as lamps, china, linens, many articles of clothing etc. Everyone was so pleased with that method of giving Christmas gifts that ever after a Christmas tree was put up and enjoyed by all. It was the first Christmas tree that the colonists had ever seen and decorated.

Settlers came from far and near to see the tree and enjoy the program of songs and readings.

The First Christmas 1877

Cold weather began in November and continued with wind storms and snow flurries. There was quite a snow before December twenty-fifth. But regardless of disagreeable weather the colonists began to think of Christmas, it had always represented the jolliest time of the whole year. Even in slavery the servants were given a vacation at Christmas time. Everyone looked forward to the joyous Yuletide Season.

At this time there were so many things lacking in the settlement (Nicodemus) that were needed to make a pleasant holiday. Food for a Christmas feast was not to be had. The merchant had very little of anything, and no meat. There would need to be some substitute for the goose, duck, chicken, goat or possum of former days, to make a holiday dinner.

The most the colonists had, was a little money, but a market was too far away. Everyone thought of previous Christmas times and wondered what could be done this time. Just two days before Christmas some young men came from the Bow Creek region with a number of wild turkeys which the colonists bought. The next day another party passed through the settlement and peddled some deer and antelope meat to them. Then by dividing, exchanging and planning, each family was able to prepare a holiday feast that baffled criticism, and that dinner was never forgotten by those pioneers.

Children as eager as usual for Santa Claus, were given little homemade gifts. Toys cut from the soft stone, rag dolls, and a little candy. One mother said that she gave three sticks of candy and four peanuts to each of her two little girls. It was a jolly time and everyone was happy.

There were many things that they did not have. But there was one thing, the basic thing; which was the most important of all other things, that they did have. It was the joy of the gift of the babe of Bethlehem, that came to be the light of a darkened and saddened world, that brought peace and happiness, that no one could have had, had not the Christ child come to earth (over) 1900 years before on Christmas Eve. Prayer service was held in the homes and that night was made vocal with songs of praise to the Redeemer. Christmas night Carolers sang; "Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly", "Joy to the World", "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem", and other songs of equal beauty. All sensed the Christ Spirit of the occasion. They realized that only happiness, love, deep gratitude, and a little sincere humility should be in the minds of hearts of God's people at this glorious season of the year.

○ We give this simple Xmas treat to remind you of the simple Xmas treats given to the children of the early settlers. Let these 3 pieces of candy and 4 peanuts remind you of the pioneer mother's love of her children at Xmas. Let it also remind you of the love that we have for you. But let us remember most importantly, the love that God had for us when he gave us his only begotten son, Christ. Merry Xmas and God's blessings through the coming year.

The Nicodemus Historical Society

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“And his name shall
be called Wonderful,
Counsellor, The mighty God,
The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.”

ISAIAH 9:6

First Missionary Baptist Church

Christmas Program

December 19, 1993

6:00 p.m.

Call to Worship	Pastor Hemingway
Master of Ceremony	Deacon L. Clark
Congregational Song	Page 58
Prayer	
Scripture	
Congregational Song	Page 63
Special Selection	Bro. Wallace Clark
Reading	Sis. Letha Napue
A Selection	Choir
Reading	Sis. Angela Bates
A Selection	Choir
Christmas Play	Jr. Choir
Reading	Bro. Frank Dowdell
Treats	Sunday School and Mission
Remarks	Deacon Clark Pastor Hemingway
Benediction	Pastor Hemingway

“The Birth of Christ”

Directed by Sis. JohnElla Holmes

Players:

Narrator

Bro. Lateef Dowdell

Angels

LueCreasea Holmes

TaSheena Carter

Brian Gardner

Shepards

Mario McMeans

Daniel Moore

Louis Gardner

Wise Men:

Michael Holmes

Wallace Clark

Terry Petrie

Joseph:

Steven Gardner

Mary:

NaTusha Terry

Baby Jesus:

Sarah Moore

Thank you for coming out and supporting the Sunday School department and its Christmas program. We pray you received something more than entertainment from our program. God bless you and keep you during these Holidays.

**Deacon L. Clark,
Superintendent Sunday School**

Historical Trivia

Over the last five issues we have provided you with many historical facts about sites and people of Nicodemus. We encourage you to test your knowledge by answering the following questions. See how many answers you know without going back to previous issues.

What was the name of the first school teacher in Nicodemus?

What were some of the subjects taught?

How many books did she have to work with? Name one that she had two copies of?

Name at least 5 school teachers who taught at the Nicodemus School?

In what year was the Nicodemus School officially recorded in Graham County?

What was the Nicodemus School officially called?

In what year did the Nicodemus School close its doors to public education?

Name one of the several hotels operated on the Nicodemus townsite in the late 1800's?

Who was the original owner of the "Blue House"?

What is the official name of what we consider Main street in Nicodemus?

Who was a prominent attorney from Nicodemus, having an office in Hill City?

On what street in Hill City was his office?

What was the name of the general store located on the corner of 3rd and Washington streets, that once housed the post office?

Prof. Shannon
Hubert Barry
Fanny Jones
Offe Green
Louisa Craig
Vergie Green

Dist No 1

DZ Fletcher

Washington St

W.L. Sayers
W Main St

Sayers Store

THE KANSAS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY TRAIL

African Americans began coming to the promised land of Kansas as early as the 1850's. They came — both freestaters and former slaves — to break virgin prairie sod and to build new homes. In doing so, they changed the color of the face of the Kansas frontier forever, joining white settlers and Native Americans in integrating the prairie. Their legacy of courage carried into the 20th century as Kansans spearheaded the effort to end segregation in America's public schools. African Americans are now being recognized through memorials, historic designations and commemorations for their important role in Kansas history.

Story by Angela Bates



This 1879 *Harpers Weekly* illustration, provided by the Kansas State Historical Society, depicts African Americans leaving the South for the free lands of Kansas.

HISTORIC NICODEMUS KANSAS

In the summer of 1876 W. R. Hill, who was originally from Indiana migrated to the western plains of Kansas. He met and became partners with W. H. Smith, an African American resident of the area since 1874. They began a partnership that led them to establish two towns on the western high plains of Kansas. Hill City, to be populated by whites, and the other, an all African American town they named Nicodemus.

They traveled to Topeka in search of African American who wanted to settle in northwestern Kansas. While in Topeka they contacted a group of African American men, all from Kentucky, who were interested in their venture. Shortly thereafter, the Nicodemus Town Company was organized with W.H. Smith as president, Simon P. Roundtree as secretary, Zach T. Fletcher as corresponding secretary, and W.R. Hill the treasurer.

The actual site of Nicodemus was said to have been selected by W. R. Hill. When he selected the town site of Nicodemus he was said to have looked all day, and after waking from a rest in the shade of a cottonwood tree, he decided that that location was as good as any. The site of Nicodemus is located approximately one-half mile from the eastern border of Graham county and less than a mile north of the Solomon River, on Highway 24, between the towns of Stockton and Hill City.

The name Nicodemus, is believed to have been selected from a song written by Henry Works, a Civil War song writer. The titled was "Wake Nicodemus". The lyrics were printed on circulars used to promote Nicodemus. It encouraged African Americans to leave the South and seek refuge on free government land in Kansas. Nicodemus was known by slaves throughout the South as a prophet and the first slave to have bought his freedom. The lyrics used on the circular is as follows: