

## **NICODEMUS, KANSAS**

**Established 1877**

It has been over 113 years since the founding of Nicodemus. Over five generations have survived and weathered the storms which stifled the growth of this spirited and struggling community. When the original settlers arrived in this barren "Promised Land" in 1877, this land that held the hopes and dreams of a promising future, they believed that God had not forgotten or forsaken them.

The migration of many ex-slaves from the post Civil War South in search of personal freedom and the opportunity to build a new life, brought many black settlers to Nicodemus. Benjamin "Pap" Singelton promoted throughout the South, the establishment of all Black towns in Kansas. However, a group of Black men from Topeka established the The Nicodemus Town Company. The first group numbering around 30, came from Kentucky in September of 1877. Another group nearly 200, arrived the next spring. Another group of settlers arrived in 1878, also from Kentucky. Finally, in 1879 the last two groups arrived from Mississippi.

Nicodemus flourished for several years, during which time a strong commercial district was established, with hotels, a bank, law firms, physicians, blacksmiths, loan agents, livery stables, and a school. Also during this period Nicodemus organized a baseball team, a literary society, and a benefit society dedicated to assisting distressed residents of the community.

In 1887 when the Union Pacific and Missouri Pacific Railroads failed to extend their rails through Nicodemus, the beginning of the major decline of Nicodemus began. Little did they know that they decided the fate of Nicodemus, and it's ability to thrive was soon diminished.

However, in 1976, 99 years later, Nicodemus finally received recognition and consideration for it's unique position in the history of the great American Mid West. Designated as a National Historic Landmark, Nicodemus was given a renewed sense of hope in fulfilling the dream of economic and self sufficient freedom.

In April 1989 the Nicodemus Historical Society was established. We are currently taking steps to re-establish Nicodemus and its place in History, through historic preservation. Our major objective is to rebuild and preserve the existing historical structures on the townsite, collect and preserve the written, oral, and photographic history of Nicodemus. Finally we want to establish Nicodemus as a National Historic Site.

We appreciate your interest and welcome your donations and support.

**The Nicodemus Historical Society**  
**Rural Route #2, Box 139**  
**Nicodemus, Kansas 67625**  
**(913) 839-4280**