

Beg your pardon, Mister. But we grow corn.

PRENTIS

(Photo of corn.) Well, there you go. Guess that soil isn't as bad as I first thought. Corn.

But what most interests my journalist's eye was what I can see in the distance as I make my final approach to Nicodemus. Many dugouts (photo). Here's one of them. (Photo.) Even your occasional stone house. (Photo.) And the irony and excitement of this new civilization in the vastness of western Kansas.

(Turns from camera and speaks directly to audience.)

100th meridian. Something special about that number maybe. It's also a latitude that is supposedly too arid to support life. But any decent journalist can tell you that things are not always as they first seem. I'd heard of Nicodemus, the life these immigrants have been building for themselves since arriving in '77, and I decided to see for myself.

Pardon me, ma'am. Nam's Prentis. Noble Prentis. You've got a nice settlement here.

ESTHER

So we do. Thank you. I'm Esther. Excuse me while I get back to my quilting.

PRENTIS

(chuckling) See what I mean? These are determined folks. And if I were in the predicting business, I'd say they're here to stay and 150 years from now their great-grandchildren--some of them anyway--will still be here. Not in the predicting business, though. Just report the facts as I see them. And a few good photographs to help by readers get the full picture.

(Photo.) There he is. Henry Williams. First baby born in Nicodemus.

ESTHER

How do you know so much about Nicodemus?

PRENTIS

I'm a journalist. Snooping is my business.

ESTHER

Nicodemus isn't the only black settlement, you know.