

Leon J. Staab

Photographer

115 W. 10th St.
Hays, KS 67601
913-625-7544



**He was
lifted
up, and
a cloud
took him
out of
their
sight.**



PALCO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Pat Ault-Duell

Eastertide

May 19, 1996

.....God's People Gather.....

Prelude

Call to Worship

Parish Notices

Greeting the Brothers & Sisters in Christ

.....To Praise and Pray.....

Hymn Sing

Jesus Calls Us	#398	vs. 1,2,4
He Leadeth Me	#128	vs. 1,2,3
O God Our Help	#117	vs. 1,2

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Special Music

Choir

.....To Remember God's Mighty Works.....

Scripture Reading

Genesis 12:1-9

Introduction of Ms. Bates-Tompkins

Presentation

"The Role of the African-American Church in the Western Migration of the African-American"

.....And to Respond in Love.....

Offering

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Closing Hymn "And Are We Yet Alive"

#553

Benediction

Postlude

***** ***** ***** ***** *****

Coming Events

Today: 10:30 Fellowship Time
 Tuesday: 9:00 Craft Booth work day
 Wednesday: 6:30 Choir
 7:30 UMW
 8:30 Day Care Committee Meeting
 Saturday: 10:00- 4:30 - Craft/Food Booth at Alumni Reunion (PUMY)

Special Thanks today to Ms. Angela Bates-Tompkins for her presentation. Mr. Bates-Tompkins is President of the Nicodemus Historical Society and has written and presented numerous articles, books, and scripts on the subject of today's talk. Welcome and thanks!

Special Thanks today to Carol Steeples and Wanda Heller and our choir for the worship music.

Never More Present

At the very moment that we want Jesus to be most vivid something obscures him. All things come and go in life. Jesus came and went. Sometimes there is an unrecognized good in the going. A parent takes a small boy to camp and goes home without him. But the parent's going was for the child's good; the child must learn how to live with his contemporaries, how to carry his own load, how to play and how to get along without the constant oversight of his parents. There are times when God disappears to put us on our own. He wants persons, not puppets. And yet there is a sense in which Jesus did not go away at all. Whereas he had once dwelt among them, he now dwelt within them! In some ways he was more real than he was before. They could reach him wherever they were. So in one sense Jesus was never more present than when he was absent!

From The Interpreter's Bible
Volume IX. Copyright 1951 by
Abingdon Press

Wanda Heller
102 Gurn Ave.
Palco Ks 67657

913-737-2165

Accompanied the *Academy*
~~Choir~~ Choir late 1960's.
(67-68 or 68-69)

Cover Text: Acts 1:9 NRSV

Cover Photo: Sid Dorris

Readings for Seventh Sunday of Easter: Acts 1:6-14; Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35;
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11; John 17:1-11

5963

Word Alive!
Litho in USA

Sponsored By

The Nicodemus Historical Society
R.R.#2 Box 139
Bogue, Kansas 67625
(913) 674-3311

Contact

Angela Bates-Tompkins,
President
(913) 674-3311 or 674-2084



EXHIBIT FUNDED BY:
Kentucky Humanities
Madd Matter of Hays
Pioneer Photography of Hays
Signs & Designs of Hays
William McIntyre, Photographer

The Role of the
African American Church
In the Migration to Kansas:
The Kansas Kentucky
Connection



St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church
National Historic Landmark of Nicodemus

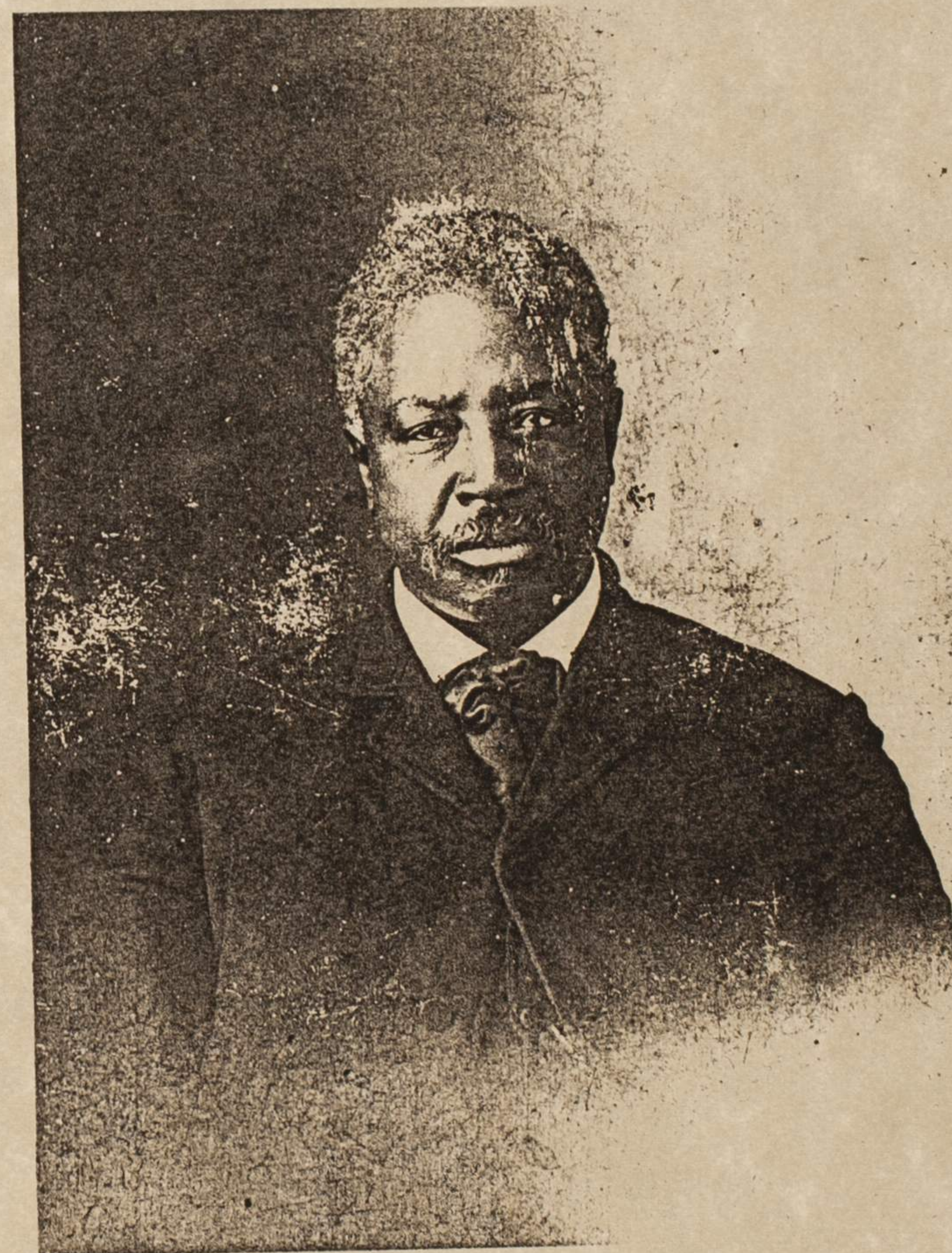
Provide your members and or auxiliaries with a fine opportunity to see and hear how the African American Church played a central role in the western migration of the African American. Angela Bates-Tompkins completed research and an exhibit on the Kansas-Kentucky Connection and the role of the church in the migration to Kansas. This concludes her research started in 1993 that took her to Kentucky to research the former churches and plantations of former settlers of Nicodemus.

This 1 hour slide presentation of historic photos including early churches, the founders, members and settlers are presented and woven with the history and personal accounts of the African Americans that migrated west in search of true freedom, and their unbending faith in God that pervaded every aspect of their life.



Reverend John and LeeAnna Samuels
Great, Great, Great Grandparent of
Angela Bates-Tompkins

SCHEDULE TODAY
Your Congregation or auxilleries
for
1 hour presentation
or the 20 piece photo exhibit



Reverend Daniel Hickman
Founder of Mt. Olive Baptist Church
Nicodemus, 1878

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The Role of the African American Church In the Migration to Kansas: The Kansas Kentucky Connection



St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church
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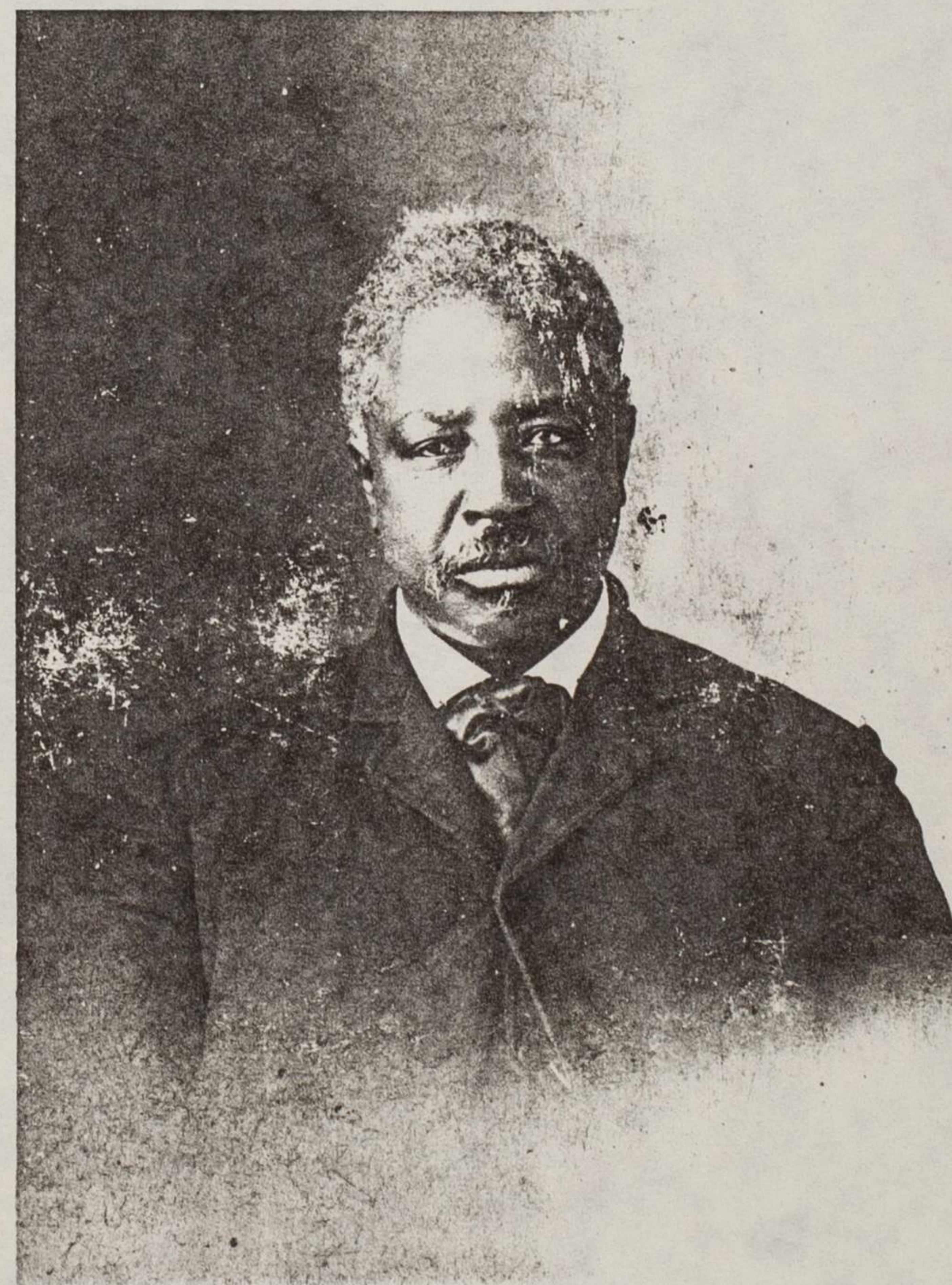


Reverend John and LeeAnna Samuels
Great, Great, Great Grandparent of
Angela Bates-Tompkins

SCHEDULE TODAY
Time Available from
April 8 through June 1

\$150 + Mileage (.29 cents) and/or
Good Will Donation

Schedule for the 20 piece photo
and plexiglass panel exhibit
\$100.00 Donation to Nicodemus Historical Society



Reverend Daniel Hickman
Founder of Mt. Olive Baptist Church
Nicodemus, 1878

The Women of Nicodemus exhibit features photos of the early pioneer women and the generations of women that followed. The photographs depict groups of women, who over the years gathered for various social and community affairs. Many of the photos capture the feelings and emotions that they must have felt and shared, even toward each other.

These African American women exhibit a spirit of 'togetherness', a closeness that transcends the social connectiveness or geographic ties with one another. In various photos it is quite obvious that they knew how to have a good time in spite of the harsh environment and social isolation of living on the High Plains of Kansas.

The striking photographs depict the social aspects of the women in the community as well as their love for each other and the fashions of the time. Four generations of women that were a part of this historical all African American town can be seen in four separate, but similar photographs. Dynamic as each photo is, a story unfolds with each.



The exhibit was first conceived as a result of a presentation made by Angela Bates, President of the Nicodemus Historical Society, when giving a program on the women of Nicodemus at Wichita State University, in Wichita, Kansas March 2, 1991.

The slide and lecture presentation is available for booking and includes the history of the Women of Nicodemus and the role of the African American women in the West.

Provide your members and or auxiliaries with a fine opportunity to see and hear how the African American Church played a central role in the western migration of the African American. Angela Bates-Tompkins completed research and an exhibit on the Kansas-Kentucky Connection and the role of the church in the migration to Kansas. This concludes her research started in 1993 that took her to Kentucky to research the former churches and plantations of former settlers of Nicodemus.

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The Role of the
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St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church
National Historic Landmark of Nicodemus

THE NICODEMUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
R.R. # 2, Box 139
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(913) 674-3311

Non Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hill City, KS 67642
Permit No. 94

A National Historic Landmark An All African American Pioneer Town

The Nicodemus Historical Society

R.R.#2 Box 139 Bogue, Kansas 67625

(913) 674-3311



Angela Bates-Tompkins
President, Author, and Historian
Available to Kansas Schools

Dressed in a beautiful Victorian dress, Angela will provide you and your students with a dynamic presentation on the history of Nicodemus, the only remaining all African American town left west of the Mississippi. She will autograph the most recent book on Nicodemus "Going Home to Nicodemus" (5th grade reader) where she is featured along side her great great grandfather Perry Bates, Civil War veteran and settler of Nicodemus. She will read "Wagon Wheels" (2nd grade reader) about the Muldie family that settled in Nicodemus and captivate the children with stories and personal accounts of these and other former slaves of Kentucky. Photos and slides also available.

She has spear headed a project with Senator Dole, Congressman Pat Roberts and the National Parks to obtain National Park status for Nicodemus. Angela has been featured in and consultant to many documentaries, books and films, is author of many books, educational curriculum, and wrote the Kansas Tourism guide "Kansas African American History Trail"

This is Kansas history ALIVE!

CALL (913) 674-3311 NOW to
Schedule Angela for Next School Year

The Only Remaining All African American Pioneer Town

THE NICODEMUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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A National Historic Landmark An All African American Pioneer Town

WHITE CHRISTIAN

- o Justified slavery stating that they were charged with taking care of the lesser animals (including their slaves).
- o A common defense of slavery was that it brought Christianity to the 'heathen'.
- o If a black received the hope of life eternal, should he not willingly give his earthly services in return? Properly taught, religion should make the slave more content with his lot on earth by focusing his attention on the hereafter.
- o Religion helped reconcile many slaves to their unfortunate status, it helped the slave to endure slavery.
- o Whites feared any slave assemblage might result in plotting escape or insurrection and as a result whites restricted slave worship. In 1857 Kentucky Senator George Silvertooth introduced a bill to prohibit blacks from preaching, but it never passed.
- o In some community black churches and black ministers were allowed, but at least two white men had to be present at each meeting/gathering.
- o Kentucky churches "reflected the society of which they were a part.

FOR EXAMPLE

The BAPTIST

- o Were Anti-slavery and it was easier for churches of that denomination to admit slaves to membership than it was for churches more restricted by hierarchical regulations.
- o A number of black ministers became locally well known in Kentucky. John Ashburn, known as "John the Baptist" (1816/1817) was said to preach with great power and energy and had large congregations of whites and blacks.
- o 1854 Landon Ferrel, a free black, was the minister of the largest church in the state - First African Baptist Church in Lexington.

SINCE THE 1970S NICODEMUS HAS THRIVED AS A RESULT OF ITS HISTORY. DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK IN 1976, THE COMMUNITY SOUGHT TO PRESERVE ITS ARCHITECTURAL, PHOTOGRAPHIC, WRITTEN AND ORAL HISTORY. IN 1989, FIVE DESCENDANTS ORGANIZED THE NICODEMUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND ANGELA BATES, ITS PRESIDENT, BEGAN A LONG, ARDUOUS JOURNEY TO REDISCOVER ITS PAST. HER RESEARCH UNCOVERED SOME OF THE FORGOTTEN KENTUCKY SEEDS. THE FAMILY CONNECTIONS AS WELL AS THE HISTORY HAD BEEN FORGOTTEN IN THE DARK YEARS OF THE 1930S AND 1940S. CLARK MOORE, A BARBER IN GEORGETOWN, WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO BE GENEALOGICALLY CONNECTED TO RESIDENTS OF NICODEMUS. HIS GREAT GREAT GRANDPARENTS WERE GEORGE AND EFFIE MOORE, TWO OF THE FIRST MIGRANTS TO KANSAS. WILLIAM MCINTYRE, A SCOTT COUNTY HISTORIAN AND PHOTOGRAPHER, WAS THE FIRST SCOTT COUNTY RESIDENT TO VISIT NICODEMUS, MARKING A RENEWAL OF THE KANSAS-KENTUCKY CONNECTION. MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY HAD SETTLED IN WAKEENEY, TREGO COUNTY BUT RETURNED TO KENTUCKY AFTER FACING MANY HARDSHIPS ON THE PLAINES.

WILLIAM MCINTYRE BELIEVES HE IS A DIRECT DESCENDANT OF COLONEL RICHARD M. JOHNSON, HERO OF THE BATTLE OF THE THAMES AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. HIS GREAT GRANDFATHER, ANDREW MCINTYRE, MARRIED SUSAN LIGHTFOOT, THE DAUGHTER OF HATLEY LIGHTFOOT OF THE JOHNSON PLANTATION. THEIR SON MILTON WAS BORN IN WAKEENEY AND LATER BECAME MINISTER OF THE ZEBULAH BAPTIST CHURCH OF WHITE SULPHUR, SCOTT COUNTY. THE MARRIAGE OF ANDREW AND SUSAN ON DECEMBER 29, 1873 WAS WITNESSED BY REV. SILAS LEE, WHO MIGRATED TO NICODEMUS WHERE HE ORGANIZED THE NICODEMUS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN 1879.

THE MEETING OF WILLIAM MCINTYRE AND ANGELA BATES UNCOVERED A STRONG CONNECTION BETWEEN FORMER SLAVES ON THE JOHNSON PLANTATION AND THE FAMILIES OF NICODEMUS. IN 1993 BARRIE THOMPSON, A RESIDENT OF LEXINGTON, BECAME THE FIRST KENTUCKIAN TO MOVE TO NICODEMUS SINCE THE INITIAL MIGRATIONS OF THE 1870S.

5

AS IN MOST ASPECTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE THE CHURCH PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE MIGRATION FROM KENTUCKY TO KANSAS. W.R. HILL AND THE REV. ROYDTREE ENLISTED THE AID OF KENTUCKY PASTORS. SEEKING A BETTER LIFE FOR THEIR FLOCKS THE MINISTERS OF MT. OLIVE OF DRY RUN, FIRST BAPTIST OF GEORGETOWN, STAMPING GROUND BAPTIST, ZEBULAH BAPTIST OF WHITE SULPHUR AND MT. PLEASANT IN SADIEVILLE LED OR SENT MEMBERS OF THEIR CONGREGATIONS TO KANSAS.

IN KANSAS THE CHURCH CONTINUED TO BE THE GUIDING FORCE AS THE PIONEERS FACED ADAPTATION TO NEW LIVING CONDITIONS AND NEW FORMS OF AGRICULTURE. REV. SILAS LEE, A MINISTER IN SCOTT COUNTY, CREATED THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF NICODEMUS IN 1879. CHARLES WILLIAMS, ONE OF THE 1877 MIGRANTS, WAS THE FIRST TRUSTEE OF THE CHURCH. IN 1880 THE ST. PAUL CHURCH A.M.E. WAS ORGANIZED BY JERRY MEYERS AND THE NICODEMUS AREA HAS BOTH A ZEBULAH CHURCH AND A MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH, NAMED IN HONOR OF THE CONGREGATIONS' FORMER CHURCHES IN SCOTT COUNTY.

Do you have a first name for Rev Roundtree?

- African American led
- people who were economically able & literate
- different than the exodus migrant
- genealogy - connection during "Family" - greatest link of the migration
- Emancipation - merge 1878!
 - social event immediate
 - founding of town & church
- the sense of community & family is what brings people back, & motivation for restoration & new migration
- 1st AA town west of the Towns Appleton West

gained national attention from white & black newspapers in its promotion

Why KS.

- Homestead Act
- Independence
- John Brown
- salaried not exist
- AA had autonomy over their lives in KS
- struggle that we have
- Town social
- Blount
- Spring Hill
- Mason
- etc.
- Schools
- 1st in
- open

TRIVMP over great odds

THE STORY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN CENTRAL KENTUCKY IS NOT A PLEASANT ONE. THOUGH FARMS IN THE BLUEGRASS COUNTIES WERE LARGER MOST FARMS DEPENDED ON CORN, HEMP, AND CATTLE, CROPS ILL-SUITED FOR SLAVES. IN SCOTT COUNTY, FOR EXAMPLE, ONLY FORTY THREE FARMS QUALIFIED FOR THE DEFINITION OF PLANTATION. MOST SLAVES, THEREFORE, LIVED IN GROUPS OF FIVE OR LESS. SOMETIMES THE RESULTING INTIMACY BRED AFFECTION BETWEEN MASTER AND SLAVE. MORE OFTEN, HOWEVER, IT LED TO OVERWORK, INADEQUATE PROVISIONS AND SEXUAL ABUSE.

DURING THE CIVIL WAR KENTUCKY SLAVES VOICED THEIR SENTIMENTS THROUGH THEIR ACTIONS. THOUSANDS DESERTED THE PLANTATIONS, SEEKING SAFETY IN UNION ARMY CAMPS AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF "PALMER'S PASSES," THE TRAVEL VOUCHERS ISSUED BY GENERAL JOHN M. PALMER TO BLACKS SEEKING TO LEAVE OR FIND WORK.

AFTER THE WAR AFRICAN AMERICANS WANTED REAL FREEDOM. THEY SOUGHT LAND, HOUSING, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. JOHN ALVORD, ORGANIZER OF THE FREEDMANS SAVINGS BANK CLAIMED THAT THE 12,000 BLACKS IN THE LEXINGTON AREA WERE AMONG THE MOST PROSPEROUS IN ALL OF THE SOUTH. WHITES, HOWEVER, RESENTED EVEN THE LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLACKS. REGULATORS, WHITES WHO WANTED TO RESTORE THE OLD WAYS, BURNED FREEDMEN SCHOOLS, AND MURDERED, MUTILATED AND TERRORIZED THE FREEDPERSONS.

AFRICAN AMERICANS FOUND SUPPORT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND THEIR CHURCHES. THE BLACK CHURCH, EXCLUSIVELY CONTROLLED BY BLACKS, BECAME THE CENTRAL UNIFYING FORCE AND THE PRIMARY INSTRUMENT USED TO PROMOTE AND DEFEND BLACKS POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY.

NEVERTHELESS, CENTRAL KENTUCKY'S AFRICAN AMERICANS BELIEVED THEY COULD ACHIEVE MORE OF THE AMERICAN DREAM. IN THE SPRING OF 1877 W.R. HILL AND REV. ROUNDTREE, PROMOTERS OF A BLACK SETTLEMENT CALLED NICODEMUS IN KANSAS, VISITED LOCAL CHURCHES AND ENCOURAGED EMIGRATION. MT. OLIVE CHURCH OF DRY RUN, FIRST BAPTIST OF GEORGETOWN, STAMPING GROUND BAPTIST, ZEBULAH BAPTIST OF WHITE SULPHUR AND MT. PLEASANT IN SADIEVILLE LED THE MOVEMENT. KANSAS BECAME THE 'PROMISED LAND,' BEGINNING A RELATIONSHIP THAT ENRICHES THE LIFE OF BOTH KANSAS AND KENTUCKY.

• consequent AA & whites daily interacted in the mines & work.

(1)

IN APRIL 1877 W.R. HILL, W.H. SMITH AND FIVE RELIGIOUS LEADERS, ORIGINALLY FROM KENTUCKY BUT LIVING IN TOPEKA, KANSAS, FORMED THE NICODEMUS TOWN COMPANY. THEY PLANNED THE TOWNSITE ON THE NORTHWEST HIGH PLAINS OF KANSAS AND NAMED IT NICODEMUS, AFTER THE FIRST AFRICAN SLAVE TO PURCHASE HIS FREEDOM. THEY RETURNED TO THEIR BLUEGRASS HOMES TO SOLICIT SETTLERS. REV. ROUNDTREE, SECRETARY OF THE COMPANY, AND W.R. HILL, TREASURER, SPOKE TO CONGREGATIONS IN SEVERAL SCOTT COUNTY CHURCHES. REV. MORRIS BELL, THE FOUNDING MINISTER OF MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH, BECAME THE PRESIDENT OF THE 'LEXINGTON COLONY,' LEADING THE FIRST GROUP TO NICODEMUS IN 1877. (SEE HANDBILL). NEARLY THREE FOURTHS OF THE CONGREGATION OF MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH MIGRATED TO NICODEMUS WHERE, IN 1879, THE REV. DANIEL HICKMAN ESTABLISHED THE FIRST CHURCH IN GRAHAM COUNTY KANSAS, NAMING IT MT. OLIVE IN HONOR OF THEIR CHURCH IN KENTUCKY. JERRY SCRUGGS SR., RAS KIRTLEY, THORNTON WILLIAMS AND MINOR LEWIS, DEACONS IN THE MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH, GEORGETOWN, MIGRATED TO NICODEMUS WITH A SECOND GROUP IN 1878.

COINCIDING WITH THE VISIT BY THE NICODEMUS TOWN PROMOTERS, W.R. HILL AND REV. ROUNDTREE, THE CINCINNATI SOUTHERN RAILROAD OPENED A ROUTE FROM CINCINNATI THROUGH THE BLUEGRASS COUNTIES. THE CINCINNATI SOUTHERN PROVIDED THE TRANSPORTATION NECESSARY FOR SOME CENTRAL KENTUCKY BLACKS TO ESCAPE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE REGION FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN FRONTIER KANSAS. THE MANY WHO LEFT SCOTT COUNTY BOARDED THE TRAINS AT PAYNES DEPOT NEAR MIDWAY, GEORGETOWN AND SADIEVILLE. THE TRAINS TOOK THEM NORTH TO CINCINNATI AND THEN WEST INTO THE PLAINS OF KANSAS. THE LAST STOP WAS AT ELLIS, KANSAS, ONLY 35 MILES SOUTH OF THEIR NEW HOME. A MEASLES OUTBREAK CAUSED A TWO WEEK DELAY. THE WEARY TRAVELERS FACED A QUARANTINE IN A MAKE SHIFT TENT TOWN ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF ELLIS. EMMA WILLIAMS, EIGHT MONTHS PREGNANT, WELCOMED THE MUCH NEEDED REST BEFORE THE TWO DAY JOURNEY, BY FOOT, NORTH TO NICODEMUS.

THEIR FIRST VIEW OF NICODEMUS WAS NOT ONE TO INSPIRE CONFIDENCE. A FLAT BARREN LAND, ^{without a} ~~NO~~ TREES, AND ~~NO~~ VISIBLE HOUSING BECAUSE THE RESIDENTS LIVED UNDERGROUND TOOK ITS TOLL ON PEOPLE WHO HAD HOPED FOR SO MUCH AND TRAVELLED SO FAR. WILLIANA HICKMAN, THE WIFE OF REV. DANIEL HICKMAN SUMMED UP THE DISAPPOINTMENT WHEN SHE VIEWED THE SIGHT UPON HER ARRIVAL IN 1878. "WHEN WE GOT IN SIGHT OF NICODEMUS, THE MEN SHOUTED, 'THERE IS NICODEMUS!' BEING VERY SICK, I HAILED THE NEWS WITH GLADNESS. I LOOKED WITH ALL THE EYES I HAD. 'WHERE IS NICODEMUS? I DON'T SEE IT.' MY HUSBAND POINTED OUT VARIOUS SMOKES COMING OUT OF THE GROUND AND SAID, 'THIS IS NICODEMUS.' THE FAMILIES LIVED IN DUGOUTS. WE LANDED AND ONCE AGAINST STRUCT TENTS. THE SCENERY TIME WAS NOT AT ALL INVITING, AND I BEGAN TO CRY." SHE WAS NOT ALONE. OVER SIXTY MEMBERS OF THE FIRST GROUP RETURNED TO KENTUCKY OR MOVED TO EASTERN KANSAS CITIES.

Do this night.

in Nicodemus

THE EARLY YEARS WERE VERY DIFFICULT. SUPPLIES QUICKLY RAN OUT AND THE NEAREST TOWN WAS ELLIS 35 MILES TO THE SOUTH. REMINISCENT OF VIRGINIA PIONEERS, THE KANSAS SETTLERS WERE AIDED BY THE INDIANS. THE OSAGE AND POTOWATOMI SHARED GAME AND GOVERNMENT PROVISIONS THEY HAD RECEIVED. BY 1880 THE TOWN HAD ESTABLISHED A BUSINESS DISTRICT WITH HOTELS, LIERY STABLE, A MERCATILE STORE, REAL ESTATE OFFICES, AND A POST OFFICE. SEVERAL CHURCHES WERE ESTABLISHED IMEDIATELY AND A SCHOOL WAS ~~HEED~~ IN A DUG OUT.

started

IN 1885, THE PROMISE OF A RAILROAD SPURRED THE TOWN'S GROWTH. IN ANTICIPATION OF PROSPERITY THE POPULATION GREW TO ALMOST 700. WHAT PROMISED A BOOM, HOWEVER, PROVED A BUST FOR NICODEMUS. THE UNION PACIFIC LAID TRACKS SOUTH OF THE SOLOMON RIVER BYPASSING NICODEMUS AND ITS CITIZENS BEGAN TO LEAVE. SOME BUSINESSES MOVED TO THE NEWLY ORGANIZED RAILROAD TOWN OF BOGUE, JUST 5 MILES SOUTHWEST OF NICODEMUS. THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE DUST BOWL ALSO TOOK A TOLL. SINCE THE 1930'S THE POPULATION HAS CONTINUED TO DWINDLE, THE YOUTH, PARTICULARLY, LEAVING FOR LARGER URBAN CENTERS. SINCE 1978, HOWEVER, THE EMANCIPATION CELEBRATION BRINGS FORMER RESIDENTS BACK HOME THE LAST WEEKEND IN JULY--TO NICODEMUS--WHERE AFRICAN AMERICAN PIONEERS LAID DOWN DEEP ROOTS.

anastasia annual

Handwritten signature

(4)

Kentucky, a state of small farms of corn, hemp and cattle in the central Bluegrass area, was not suited for mass slave labor. During the 1850's less than 28% of whites in Kentucky owned slaves, and only 5 had more than 100. Fewer than 20 slaves was about average and 24% owning only 1 slave. In 1860 slaves accounted for 19.5% the total population. Scott County had 52% of all slaves, the largest in the state. Lexington in Fayette County had almost as many. In 1870 John Alvord, organizer and charter member of the Freedmen's Savings Bank, set up by Congress, during reconstruction, claimed that the 12,000 blacks in the Lexington area were among the most prosperous in all of the south....

Vice President during the term of Martin
Vice President Col. Richard M. Johnson, under Van Buren, and his family owned over 3/4 of Scott County, accounting for ownership of many of the slaves. Many of these slaves migrated to Nicodemus in 1877. Charles and Emma Williams, John and LeeAnna Samuels, Mary, Joseph, Henry, Zeriana, and Tom Johnson, Hiram Travis, and Beverly Herring, were among the many that were own by Col. Richard M. Johnson that migrated to Nicodemus. Other former slaves were the Lee, Scott, Lightfoot, McIntyre, Lewis, Moore, Clark, Craig, Reese, Kirtley, Buckner, Jackson,.....

During the Civil War in Kentucky military commander Gen. J.M. Palmer issued travel passes to almost any black, slave or free who requested one, to go where they pleased or leave the state. This began an exodus of thousands of blacks from the rural to urban areas and out of the state, substantially reducing the black population, in spite of legislative efforts to deny blacks the right to travel on stages, boats, and trains. When the Freedman's Bureau withdrew its efforts of financial and educational assistance to blacks after the war, in 1868 violence pursued and migration to the cities decline, for they no longer offered safety or opportunities that were expected. "Regulators", whites who wanted to control and regulate blacks began to murder, mutilate, sexually assault, and terrorize blacks.

The black churches which were exclusively controlled by blacks became the central driving force and primary instrument used to promote and defend blacks politicaly, econiomically and socially.

In 1877 transportation problems lessened for blacks and the Cincinnati Southern Rail Road opened a route that corssed the Ohio River and proceeded south through central Kentucky passing through Georgetown

and Lexington, and provided the much needed mode of transportation out of the oppressive central Bluegrass region. This coincided with a visit by the Nicodemus town promoters, W.R. Hill and Rev. Roundtree. In the spring of 1877 they visited the local churches promoting an exodus to the free 'promise land' of Kansas. In Scott County they visited Mt. Olive of Dry Run, First Baptist of Georgetown, Stamping Ground Baptist, Zebulah Baptist of White Sulpher and Mt. Pleasant in Saddieville.

In April of 1877, W.R. Hill and W.H. Smith formed the Nicodemus Town Company along with five other Black religious leaders, originally from Kentucky but then living in Topeka. They platted the townsite on the northwest high plains of Kansas and named it Nicodemus, after the first African Slave to purchase his freedom. They returned to their former Kentucky, Bluegrass homes to solicit settlers. Rev. Roundtree, Secretary and W.R. Hill, Treasurer spoke to congregations in several Scott County churches. Rev. Morris Bell was the first minister at Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Georgetown and became the president of the 'Lexington Colony' the first group to migrate to Nicodemus in 1877. (see handbill). 3/4 of the congregation at the Mt. Olive Baptist Church migrated to Nicodemus. Rev. Daniel Hickman, a deacon at the time went with the group and in 1879 established the Mt. Olive Baptist Church, the first church in Graham County, and named it after his former church in Georgetown. Jerry Scruggs Sr., Ras Kirtley, Thornton Williams and Minor Lewis were former deacons at Mt. Olive Baptist in Georgetown, and migrated to Nicodemus with the group in 1878.

When the L & N Railroad opened its new line, running south of Cincinnati through Central Kentucky in the spring of 1877, it coincided with the arrival of Nicodemus town promoters, W.R. Hill and Rev. Rountree. After spending time convincing members of various Scott and Fayette County churches to migrate to Kansas, the many who decided to go had the financial means and now easy transportation out of central Kentucky. The many who left Scott county left from Paynes Depot near Midway, Georgetown Depot, and the Saddieville Depot. The trains took them north to Cincinnati and then west into the Western Frontier. The last stop was at Ellis, Kansas a mere 35 miles south of their new home. A measles outbreak depleted the energetic travelers, causing a 2 week quarantine stay in a make shift tent town at Ellis. Emma Williams was 8 months pregnant and welcomed the much needed rest before the two day journey, by foot, north to Nicodemus. Upon arrival and seeing no above ground housing and, no tree in sight for miles, this barren landscape took its toll. Over 60 members of the first group returned to Kentucky or Eastern Kansas cities. In 1878 Williana and Daniel Hickman arrived with the second group and she was quoted as saying "When we got in sight of Nicodemus, the men shouted, "There is Nicoemus!" Being very sick, I hailed this news with gladness. I looked with all the eyes I had. "Where is Nicodemus? I don't see it." My husband pointed out various smokes coming out of the ground and said, "That is Nicodemus." The families lived in dugouts. We landed and once again struck tents. The scenery time was not at all inviting, and I began to cry."

The first several years were most difficult. Supplies quickly ran out and the nearest town was Ellis 35 miles to the South. The Osage and Potowatomi Indians passed through the townsite and shared game and government provisions that they received. But by 1880 the town had established a business district, with hotels, livery stable, mercantile store, real estate offices, and post office. Several churches were established immediately and school was being held in a dug out.

In 1885 the promise of the railroad prove to be another boost for the town, increasing the population to almost 700. However when the Union Pacific laid tracks just south of the Solomon River by passing Nicodemus, people became dismayed and began to leave. Some of the businesses moved to the newly organized railroad town of Bogue, just 5 miles south west of Nicodemus. Nicodemus continued to loose its population and businesses, with the Great Depression and Dust Bowl years taking their toll. Over the year since the 1930's the population has continued to dwindle, with youth leaving for larger urban areas after graduation. Although Nicodemus continued to loose its population the Emancipation Celebration, established in 1878 continues even today to draw its family home each year, the last week end in July, to the place where the first African American pioneers laid down deep roots.

Into the 70's and 80's Nicodemus was faced with a new surge of activity. After being designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976 Nicodemus acquired new housing for its elderly, The Nicodemus Villa, a 10 unit apartment complex. In 1989, five descendants organized the Nicodemus Historical Society set out to preserve the architectural, photographic, written and oral history. Angela Bates, organizer and President, began a long arduous journey of researching the early history of the first. Her findings uncovered some of the forgotten Kentucky seeds connected to the migration. Clark Moore, barber in Georgetown, was the first person to be genealogically connected to the Kentucky descendants of Nicodemus. His great great grand parents were George and Effie Moore, former residents of Georgetown and among the first settlers of Nicodemus. William McIntyre, Scott County Black historian was the first to visit Nicodemus making the re-connection with the Kansas-Kentucky 'Bluegrass' seeds. His family were among the ones that settled in WaKeeney, Trego County and returned after many hardships and adaptation to the pioneer life.

William McIntyre is direct descendant of Vice President, Col. Richard M. Johnson. His great grand father Andrew McIntyre married Susan Lightfoot, daughter to Hatley Lighthfoot of the Johnson Plantation. Their son Milton was born in WaKeeney and later became minister of the Zebulah Baptist Church of White Sulpher, Scott County. The marriage of Andrew and Susan on December 29, 1873 was witnessed by Rev. Silas Lee, who also migrated to Nicodemus and organized the Nicodemus First Baptist Church in 1879. Charles Williams among the 1877 Georgetown migrants, was the first Trustee of the church. In 1880 the St. Paul Church A.M.E. was organized Jerry Meyers in 1881.

The initial meeting of William McIntyre and Angela Bates formed a re-connection of descendants from the Johnson plantation that stretch back to the 1830's. Barrie Tompkins, blacksmith and farrier and former Lexington resident is the first Fayette County Kentuckian to move to the Nicodemus area since the initial migration of the 1800's.

Great Crossing Area

White Sulphur (developed 1830)

• Johnson/Pence

Wilson

Craig

Lee/Pence

Hall

Daniel & Imogene

Daniel's
sister

• Mary Pence + Josiah Pence

• _____ + Robert Lee

Daniel Pence operated Elijah Craig mill

Correlations

Location	Religion	KS Name	KS Name
	Methodist		Rev Silas Lee
		Johnson	
		Wilson	
		Craig	
		Lee	
		Hall	
			Ackerson
			Samuels