

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.

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THEIR FIRST VIEW OF NICODEMUS WAS NOT ONE TO INSPIRE CONFIDENCE. A FLAT BARREN LAND, ~~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.