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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2007

## ARCHEOLOGISTS TO CONDUCT INVESTIGATION IN NICODEMUS

### Annual training program June 2 – 17 open to public, early registration due May 4

Nicodemus held promise for hundreds of African Americans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Archeologists hope to gain valuable information about the everyday lives and extraordinary struggles of these settlers in Graham County during a two-week Kansas Archeology Training Program Field School, June 2-17. The Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS) and the Kansas Anthropological Association (KAA) present the annual field school. Other partners are Nicodemus National Historic Site, Midwest Archeological Center, Nicodemus Historical Society, and Washburn University. Visitors are invited to participate in all or part of the activities.

In 1877 a group of five African American men from Kentucky, headed by Reverend W. H. Smith, enlisted the help of W. R. Hill, a white land promoter, in northwest Kansas. Together they claimed a 160-acre town site along the Solomon River. They began recruiting in churches around Lexington and Georgetown in north-central Kentucky and by fall the first group of 350 people left for Kansas—what they hoped would be the “promised land.” Boom times ended, droughts and the Great Depression ensued, and by the 1950s, most of the families had left the community. Designated a National historic Landmark District in 1976, Nicodemus became a National Historic Site in 1996.

The Training Program Field School will examine the dugout ruins from the settlement time. Event highlights include the popular Collectors Night Wednesday June 6. Historical Society staff will identify artifacts and give conservation advice. No appraisals can be given. A number of other special programs are being planned and will be announced at a later date.

Registration forms submitted by May 4 qualify for a participation fee of \$20 for KAA and KSHS, Inc. members and \$80 for nonmembers. After May 4 the participation fee increases to \$30 for members and \$90 for nonmembers. Forms are available on the KSHS website at [www.ksks.org/resource/katpcurrent.htm](http://www.ksks.org/resource/katpcurrent.htm).

Although field and laboratory activities continue nonstop for the 16-day period, volunteers may participate for a single day or the entire time. Participants must be at least 10 years of age, and those younger than 14 must plan to work with a parent or other sponsoring adult at all times. A legally responsible adult must accompany participants between 14 and 18 years of age.

The KATP sponsoring organizations do not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access

to, or operation of their programs. Please make prior arrangements to accommodate individuals with disabilities or special needs by calling 785-272-8681, ext. 266.

The Kansas State Historical Society is headquartered at 6425 SW Sixth Avenue, Topeka KS 66615-1099; 785-272-8681; TTY 785-272-8683; [www.kshs.org](http://www.kshs.org)

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