



SVHA News Archive 2016 - 2017

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2016

March, 2016

NICODEMUS WOMEN'S MONTH PROGRAM

In keeping with our 20th Anniversary Celebration as a National Park, Nicodemus will be celebrated women's month on March 19, with a day filled with historical women characterizations, exhibits, and musical performances by the descendants of Nicodemus's famous gospel singers, The Williams Sisters.

Historical photos of the women of Nicodemus, hat divas, and quilt/quilters were on display. Four iconic Nicodemus women also were portrayed. First mother, Emma Williams and the story of her travels west to Nicodemus and having the first baby born into freedom here in Kansas was portrayed by her great-granddaughter, Dr. Johnella Holmes. Angela Bates, Nicodemus historian and Historical Society executive director, portrayed the first historian Lula Craig. Twillia Berry portrayed her great-grandmother Effie Moore, who smoked a pipe and grew cane, providing sorghum to the community. Last, Historical Society Museum archivist Cecelia Crocket portrayed Nettie Craig, first African American female to receive a PhD, and former resident and music teacher at Nicodemus.

To top the day's program, Twillia Berry, Johnella Holmes, and Angela Bates, descendants of the Williams sisters, recalled the time when the Williams Sisters were a popular gospel singing group in the region. They performed the songs that were sung on the album they produced in the 80s.

March, 2016

NICODEMUS NHS CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

It has been 20 years since Nicodemus was designated a National Historic Site, a unit of the National Park Service (November 12, 1996). As we celebrate our 20th Anniversary the National Park Service is also celebrating its 100th Anniversary.

Our theme for the year is "Up from the Free Soils of Kansas, Still We Rise," and have planned many activities and programs throughout the year.

Our first event, Kick-off Celebration Reception and Program, was held January 23. The March program is detailed in following article.

In conjunction with our 20th Anniversary, the Nicodemus Buffalo Soldier Association is also celebrating the national 150th anniversary of the Buffalo Soldiers, the African-American regiments of the U.S. Army. The Nicodemus Buffalo Soldier Association has planned their celebratory event on June 25 at Nicodemus.

For more information and a schedule of events, please contact Angela Bates, Executive Director, Nicodemus Historical Society at 785-421-3311 or nichis@ruraltel.net

June, 2016

Nicodemus NHS Celebrating 20 Years

Nicodemus National Historic Site continues celebrating its 20th anniversary as a unit of the National Park Service and the centennial of the National Park Service. The theme for the year is “Up from the Free Soils of Kansas, Still We Rise.”

A number of events have been held and more are planned, including the 150th Buffalo Soldier Anniversary Encampment on June 25 and, the annual Nicodemus Homecoming, July 28-30. The first African-American regiments of the U.S. Army were established in 1866, and these “Buffalo Soldiers” served the nation well during the Indian Wars, WWI, and WWII. For more information and a schedule of events, please contact Angela Bates, Executive Director, Nicodemus Historical Society at 785-421-3311 or e-mail: nichis@ruraltel.net

A new book by Charlotte Hinger --- Nicodemus: Post-Reconstruction Politics and Racial Justice in Western Kansas.

September, 2016

More About Claence Pickett

The Solomon Valley Highway24 Heritage Alliance placed a Peace Pole in the Glen Elder City Park, selecting that location to honor the work of Clarence Pickett, who grew up in that area. The summer 2016 issue of Quaker Action, published by the American Friends Service Committee, includes Clarence Pickett among significant people who shaped the work of the American Friends Service Committee.

He served as executive secretary of AFSC for 22 years, 1929-1951, directing its work through WWII and its award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947 with the British counterpart. The Quaker Action tribute (page 23) concludes: “Clarence positioned AFSC to be a vital force for peace and justice through embracing youth leadership and development, collaboration with partner organizations, valuing collective wisdom, addressing the root causes of war, and living out the radical roots of Quakerism. It was his vision, conviction, and leadership that laid the foundation for the AFSC that we know today.”

We continue to honor his memory at Glen Elder and appreciate the honor he brings to the Solomon Valley. Stop and visit the Peace Pole the next time you are in Glen Elder.

December, 2016

WATER/WAYS INITIATIVE

The SV24HA has been designated a multiple-host Partner Site for two Water/Ways Initiative host sites: Colby and Junction City. Colby will host the Smithsonian Water/Ways Exhibit from August 12 through September 24, 2017. The Smithsonian Exhibit will be in Junction City from January 6 through February 18, 2018. During this extended period the SV24HA is coordinating exhibits that will travel along the valley: Living Off the Water: The Challenge to Tame and Sustain Life in the Solomon Valley.

The anticipated schedule of valley hosts: Alton, August 2017; Beloit, September; Stockton, October; and Glasco, November.

Work is underway to continue with Nicodemus, Hill City, and Hoxie, with dates to be announced.

Coming together to tell the Solomon Valley Water/ Ways stories is truly the Alliance living out our founding vision, allowing us to tell Stories Of Land Of Man Of Nature. Every community is urged to begin investigations and conversations that focus on water locally. The Water/Ways Initiative is sponsored by the Kansas Humanities Council.

December, 2016

CELEBRATING NICODEMUS...at our annual meeting!

The SV24HA annual membership meeting, January 28, 2017, will feature a tribute to Nicodemus, one of our member communities. On November 12, 1996, Nicodemus became a National Historic Site. This year marked its twentieth anniversary, with special events throughout the year.

Charlotte Hinger, author of *Nicodemus: Post-Reconstruction Politics and Racial Justice in Western Kansas*, will speak on her experience writing this outstanding history. Angela Bates, Executive Director of the Nicodemus Historical Society, will introduce the speaker and reflect on the impact of the book following Hinger's presentation.

This is a real opportunity for us to recognize these achievements. Highway 24 provides the gateway route to Nicodemus. Now we can unite in respectful admiration.

December, 2016

KANSAS SAMPLER FESTIVAL

The SV24HA has been an enthusiastic participant in the Kansas Sampler Festival for many years. It is a friendly, colorful way to place our part of the state and our unique stories in the context of the whole state. We are grateful to the North West Kansas Travel Council (NWKTC) for hosting the regional tent displaying the Solomon Valley. North Central Kansas Tourism Council (NCKTC) helped complete our story.

The final Kansas Sampler Festival showcasing the whole state, all there is to taste and see and do as presented by community interpreters, will be May 6-7, 2017, in Winfield. This Festival has evolved into an extraordinary celebration of an extraordinary place: Kansas. A place that is more than the sum of its parts! A new format is promised for the years beyond 2017—encouraging visitors to explore by traveling themselves. This new emphasis echoes our own approach—inviting travelers to the Solomon Valley—as we share Stories Of Land Of Man Of Nature.

We are indebted to the Kansas Sampler Foundation and leader Marci Penner for inspiring and implementing the annual festivals, and now for forging a fresh model to excite traveler interest.

2017

December, 2017

Eileen Wilson, 1932-2017, age 84, died November 22, 2017, at Osborne. She shared her passion for education and history with us, serving on the SV24HA Board of Directors, representing Osborne County, for many years. Eileen was an elementary teacher in Kansas, California, Missouri, and New Mexico. She returned to Osborne to retire and serve as an active volunteer. We are grateful for her contributions to her students, family, and community. Our thoughts are with her family at this time.

December, 2017

Notes From Water/Ways Events

Beloit hosted two talks in the Museum Annex, opening the new facility with Water/Ways. On September 11, Kyle Peterson, Museum Director, provided an analysis of Mitchell County communities in relation to their proximity to water: streams and rivers. This was an original and edifying reflection on the rise and decline of rural communities. On September 17, Lane Letourneau, Kansas Water Office, provided historical prospective of water programs in Kansas. He described water technology strategies that are helping agriculture reduce and control water use, anticipating a viable Kansas for years to come.

Stockton also provided two events in conjunction with the Water/Ways exhibit at the Stockton Public Library. In addition, the Rooks County Museum prepared an outstanding photo exhibit tracing the story of Webster Lake. This pictorial history will be a vital resource for years to come. Twelve chapters of that story are revealed in over 100 photos.

On October 16, Heidi Mehl, from the Kansas Nature Conservancy, spoke on Land Ethics and Water Resources. She emphasized everyone has a land ethic—and that the land reflects that ethic! She described her own experience in the Altai Republic, Siberia, and in Kenya, tracing the eventual impact on land and water. In Kansas, the Potawatomie use of land reflects their way of life, with healthy streams and tree cover.

Scott Ross presented a program on October 18. He is the former head of the Division of Water Resources in Stockton. Although retired, he still works with water issues throughout the NW Kansas area. His talk on the history of water rights included a discussion about a well-known attorney in Stockton, Wayne McCaslin, who took on part of the battle about water rights all the way to the state legislature. The explanation of water rights is both complicated and yet interesting, especially given the increased attention that water conservation is receiving at this time.

The Solomon Valley Water/Ways exhibit made its final stop in Glasco. It was installed at the Glasco Community Foundation's Corner Store. On November 5, Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg projected stunning photos of Kansas skies, clouds, and storms and read Kansas poets' reflections on weather. The audience responded with tales of weather experiences, writing and then sharing them with each other.

December, 2017

Cawker City Ball Of Twine In A Feature Film

by Linda Clover

Early summer 2016, a movie production team member contacted me asking of possibility of using the Ball of Twine in a movie to be filmed. Of course, my answer was "yes," knowing from experience to not get too excited as many of these ideas never happen.

Of all things, the week following our Annual Twine a Thon, a road crew of 13 spent half a day filming in Cawker City. After much preplanning, it was decided not to detour traffic. Numerous takes were needed to make sure no traffic or people were in the shot but from their entourage of six vehicles.

Different Flowers is the first feature film written, directed, and produced by Kansas City native Morgan Dameron. Another producer is Shelly Long (Diane on TV series CHEERS). She also is a star in the film. The main characters are sisters portrayed by two young stars, Emma Bell and Hope Lauren, who have appeared in numerous movies and TV series. The sisters' adventure begins after

“Millie” decides to leave her groom at the altar, and they leave the church heading to their grandma’s house, traveling in “Emma’s” temperamental jeep she named Albert. Along the way they stop at the Ball of Twine. The Ball is shown in all its glory and the Old Gas Station Inn across the highway is shown as they leave. The scene is very short but shows Cawker City and The Ball of Twine in a very good way.

On September 29, *Different Flowers* was released to a few theaters nationally; Salina was one of those chosen. The movie has also been shown at numerous Film Festivals across the US and Canada and can be viewed online for a small fee.

September, 2017

Notes From Water/Ways Events

On August 6 Jay Antle, KHC Speaker, admitted his goal was to leave the audience gathered at Glen Elder State Park, confused. The Dakota Access Pipeline Controversy revealed what he called “deep historical causes of contemporary controversies.” In the current social-media age, images are spread without context. And context is what is needed to appreciate the complex historical issues raised by American Indians, weighed against economic, environmental, energy, and social concerns. A lively discussion followed Antle’s presentation.

On August 13 Aaron Barnhart, KHC Speaker, presented his program, Care for the Creation, against the backdrop of our Solomon Valley Water/Ways exhibit opening at the Bull City Steakhouse in Alton. Barnhart cited numerous projects and efforts to restore, renew, and revitalize the Earth in the face of degradation and depletion. A lively discussion with the audience confirmed their knowledge and deep concern for the Earth and environment.

September, 2017

Water/Ways Partnership Site

by Joan Nothern

We are honored to be the first exhibit-event at the new Mitchell County Historical Museum Annex, 1915 N Independence, Beloit. The exhibit will be there from September 9 through 30. On Monday, September 11, 2017, at 7:00 p.m., Kyle Peterson, Museum Director, will address From Nepaholla to the water as we know it today.

The second Beloit event will be Sunday, September 17, at 2:00 p.m., looking ahead to The Long Term Vision of Water in Kansas.

Our traveling Solomon Valley exhibit moves to the Stockton Public Library, October 7-28. Heidi Mehl, KHC Speaker, will be featured October 16, at 6:00 p.m., looking at Land Ethics and Water Resources. This is a nice connection to the Webster Dam story highlighted in our exhibit.

November finds the exhibit at The Corner Store in Glasco, November 4-25. Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg, KHC Speaker, will explore Kansas Weather in Life, Literature, and Photography, on Sunday, November 5, at 2:00 p.m.

Our concluding event will be at the annual meeting in January at Osborne. At that time we will highlight the Ground Water Story from Nicodemus to Hoxie, completing our six county journey along the Solomon River Valley.

Please plan to attend as many of these events as possible. Water has always been critical to the Solomon Valley.

June, 2017

13th Call for Voices, SVHA's Annual Writing Contest

Initiated in response to a challenge from Kansas authors to encourage local, current writers, extends an invitation for the thirteenth year of competition. The contest has categories for youth and adults in poetry and prose, fiction, essay, and autobiography. The due date for submissions is November 1, 2017. [View Submission Guidelines](#)

Questions, e-mail Joan Nothern: joannothern@gmail.com.

June, 2017

Glen Elder State Park -- Setting For Kickoff

Our valley Water / Ways exploration begins on Sunday, August 6, at 2:00p at the Hopewell Church located next to the symbolic Waconda Spring replica at Glen Elder State Park (just south of the GE State Park office.)

Jay Antle will make connections, "From Fort Laramie to Standing Rock: The Dakota Access Pipeline Controversy," to our Solomon Valley history. Mr. Antle teaches history and serves as executive director of the Center for Sustainability at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas.

The State Park setting means a daily permit fee for all entering the park. The first 10 vehicles arriving for this program will be given a \$5.00 vehicle permit for the day. We are hoping for a good turnout for this high-interest program. Do come early, and take advantage of the courtesy permit.

June, 2017

Water / Ways Partnership Site

by Joan Nothern

Our Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance is a bit unique as a Partnership Site for the Kansas Humanities Council–Smithsonian Water/ Ways Exhibit. We are a "team of sites," adding our stories to two host sites. The host sites are Colby and Junction City. Colby will have the Smithsonian Exhibit from August 12 to September 24, 2017. Junction City will have the exhibit January 6 to February 18, 2018.

It is a bold idea, daring to spread our story over a distance and over time. The first three events will deal with early land and water issues. Jay Antle, Kansas Humanities Council speaker, will be at Glen Elder State Park, August 6, addressing different ideas about land use and Federal Indian Law. This should throw light on the conditions of American Indians in the Solomon Valley before post-Civil War settlement.

A week later, the spotlight will be on Alton. Our traveling exhibit will open at the Bull City Café on August 12. Aaron Barnhart, KHC Speaker, will be there on Sunday, August 13. He will consider "Care for Creation" in the setting where natural wonders and abundance lured the town founders to claim that place.

The traveling exhibit moves to Beloit on September 9. Kyle Peterson, MCHS, and Tracey Streeter, Kansas Water Office, will look at water power in Mitchell County history and water issues in its future.

The next three hosts, Stockton, Glasco, and Osborne, will be profiled in the September issue of SVA.

The Solomon Valley traveling exhibit is titled "Living Off the Water: The Challenge to Tame and Sustain Life in the Solomon Valley."

March, 2016

Charlotte Hinger Receives Award Of Merit And Discusses Her New Book On Nicodemus

Charlotte Hinger was presented the Award of Merit for her new book, *Nicodemus: Post-Reconstruction Politics and Racial Justice in Western Kansas* (2016), and she was the featured speaker at our annual meeting on January 28, discussing the book. It was a day to celebrate Nicodemus; Angela Bates introduced Hinger and commented on the new book after the presentation. Hinger has a connection to our Solomon Valley, having spent much of her adult life at Hoxie. She is widely known for her *Lottie Albright* mystery series, set in western Kansas.

March, 2017

Angela Bates Receives Faye Minium Spirit Award

The Faye Minium Memorial Spirit Award is presented annually to an individual who has provided longtime community leadership in one of the 24 Solomon Valley Hwy 24 Heritage Alliance communities. Excerpts from her nomination follow:

Angela Bates worked for many years to provide the details of the Nicodemus story and convince Senator Robert Dole and others that Nicodemus should be designated a National Historic Site administered by the National Park Service. Nicodemus NHS celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2016 while the National Park Service celebrated its centennial.

Angela presently serves as executive director of the Nicodemus Historical Society, which she founded and served as the first president. She provided leadership for establishment of the Nicodemus Historical Society Museum. She developed the Nicodemus Historical Society Archives at the Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. She helps organize many events to commemorate the rich history of the only successful African-American settlement in Kansas, and she is a frequent speaker about Nicodemus, spreading the word to a larger audience.

She has written several books and many articles about Nicodemus, especially telling the stories of the men and women who settled and survived on the Plains of Kansas, 1877 to the present. She also performs historic African-American characters, including Stagecoach Mary Fields. In addition to all that, Angela perpetuates Ernestine Williams VanDuvall's Barbeque with her restaurant and continued production and sale of Ernestine's Bar-B-Q Sauce.

Angela is a native of Nicodemus, grew up in Pasadena CA, and worked in Washington D.C. and Denver before returning to Kansas. During all those years she became fascinated with the people and history of the Kansas town. She moved to Kansas 30 years ago, expanded her research on the families of Nicodemus, and she has been the historian of the community to the present. She is a member of the Speakers' Bureau of the Kansas Humanities Council. Angela has received recognition for her community spirit and leadership in preserving and promoting Nicodemus, including the Kansas Humanities Council Outstanding Contributions Award (1996), Woman of Distinction Award from the Kansas Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Committee (1997), and the prestigious Dr. Ralph Waldo Emerson Jones Jr. Memorial Medallion for Lifetime Achievement, presented by the Roundtable Associates at Washington D. C. in 2005 for her leadership in securing legislation that created Nicodemus National Historic Site.

For her long career as historian and booster of Nicodemus, Angela Bates is awarded the *Faye Minium Memorial Spirit Award* of the Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance