

PLAINS TALK

After the Civil War many blacks, seeking education and economic opportunities not available in the South, migrated to the Great Plains. In 1877 the Nicodemus Town Company purchased land near the south fork of the Solomon River. The land company bought the land from speculators who had obtained the property from the federal government. The first colony was established by 30 black settlers recruited from Topeka, where many Southern blacks congregated before continuing their journey further west. The first homes in Nicodemus were those built underground and the traditional soddies of the Great Plains. Later structures were made of native limestone or wood. When the railroad companies failed to run lines through Nicodemus, the dreams of great expansion were dashed. Slowly but surely the merchants and businesses left. Now Nicodemus is seeking federal assistance to preserve its artifacts and cultural heritage.

Plains Talk is a series of sixty-second public service announcements for radio produced by the Center for Great Plains Studies at Emporia State University.