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Examining the Cultural and Historical Impact of the National Historic Site Designation in Nicodemus, Kansas

Ashley Adams Adams
Walden University

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College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Ashley C. Adams

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Review Committee

Dr. Joyce Haines, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Gregory Dixon, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Mai Moua, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2016

Abstract

Examining the Cultural and Historical Impact of the
National Historic Site Designation
in Nicodemus, Kansas

by

Ashley Adams

M.P.A., Park University, 2006

B.A., University of Kansas, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August 2016

Abstract

America's National Historic Preservation Act promotes the conservation of irreplaceable sites such as Nicodemus, Kansas, an African American town founded by former slaves in 1877. The collaboration of the National Park Service (NPS) and civic partners is essential to meet the goal of preserving historic properties in Nicodemus and other minority communities. Although the NPS designated 5 Nicodemus buildings as a National Historic Site (NHS) in 1996, the few remaining residents struggle to preserve the site and attract visitors. The purpose of this ethnographic study was to explore the effects of NPS policies related to African American historic and cultural preservation. Research questions focused on the consequences of the NHS designation in Nicodemus and options for NPS policy improvement. This study was inspired by Innes and Booher's theory of complex adaptive systems and consensus building. Data were collected through interviews with 11 residents, educators, and representatives of the NPS. These data were inductively coded and then subjected to thematic analysis. Key findings indicate concerns about limited resources, NPS open competition hiring policies that do not promote the long-term employment of Nicodemus descendant-residents in spite of their ability to recount oral histories, a need for cross-cultural training in the NPS, and the inadequate promotion of the Nicodemus NHS. This study may lead to positive social change by emphasizing the need for the NPS to collaborate with the descendants and long-term residents of rural communities to preserve the historical legacy of African Americans and emphasize the strength of our nation's diversity.

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Dedication

In the Christian Bible, Nicodemus was as Pharisee and prominent leader amongst the Jewish people. He went to Jesus in secret, at night and asked him how one can be reborn again. Nicodemus declared that Jesus was a teacher from God and he reminded his associates of the laws requiring fair judgement at the time of Jesus' persecution. After Jesus' death, Nicodemus financially provided for his Jewish burial.

In his song *Wake Nicodemus*, Henry Clay Work projected Nicodemus as a slave who was purchased from Africa for a bag of gold (McWhirter, 2015). His deathbed request was to be tied to an old hollow tree trunk and to wake him for the great and coming Jubilee. This forthcoming celebration is likened to the return of Jesus, who will bring freedom for the slaves. Work described Nicodemus as a prophet and foreseer of the future. His spirit was full of courage and the promise of freedom.

Nicodemus, Kansas was a promised land, settled by former slaves who desired to live free lives of peace and prosperity (National Park Service, 2016c). Instead they experienced harsh living conditions and failed opportunities. Despite its many hardships, the Nicodemus, Kansas legacy is rich with inspiration, wisdom, perseverance, family values, and most important love.

This research is dedicated to the spirit of Nicodemus. In its namesake, is found humbling curiosity, the acknowledgment of God's blessing to his people, and the proper preservation of such a delicacy. The Nicodemus namesake also includes the wise and faithful believer of the promise of the great Jubilee. Finally, through the Nicodemus township, the namesake carries a spirit of hope for the promised land. May the spirit of Nicodemus live forever through its eloquent and extraordinary namesake.

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I would like to thank my husband, Shane for his support and motivation during this process. His spirit of perseverance helped me to stay inspired throughout this experience. I would also like to thank my parents, Leota and Lawrence, who have always encouraged me to achieve my educational goals in life. They truly are role models to me and I am blessed to have them as my parents. I would also like to thank my Aunt Carolyn and my cousin Vicky for the motivating talks and words of encouragement they both always had to offer. I would also like to thank my sisters, Joanna, Nedra, and Lauren. Finally, thank you to my cousins and entire family for allowing me to share this milestone with you at our family reunions.

I want to give a special thank you to my Grandmother, Leota Buford, who lived in Nicodemus and experienced the harsh living conditions there in her younger years. I am grateful for the blessing she passed on to me, being from such a special place. May she rest in peace knowing that the legacy of Nicodemus lives on.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In its infancy, the abolishment of slavery gave African Americans hope and prosperity (Suarez, 2014). After the Civil War, “many freedman and women lived in black towns” (Gavins, 2015, p. 37). Nicodemus, Kansas, was founded in 1877 by five African American ministers and a Caucasian businessman as a post Civil War resettlement opportunity for African Americans (National Park Service, 2016c). Over time, the town of Nicodemus grew to be one of the most thriving African American communities in U.S. history. The Nicodemus legacy embodies faith and perseverance amidst a relentless existence on a harsh but humbling land.

Today, Nicodemus symbolizes a web of physical landscape and key individual, organizational, and institutional agents interconnected through a shared system of African American history (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). The landscape of Nicodemus is a physical part of this web and is at risk of deteriorating without improved conservation efforts. The few remaining Nicodemus residents, some of whom, are the descendants of early Nicodemus settlers (Kansas City Kansas Community College Cable Channel 17, 2012), form the center of this web and serve as core connections to the town.

In 1996, the United States National Park Service (NPS) designated five buildings in Nicodemus as a National Historic Site (NHS) (see Appendix C). This legislation serves to preserve and protect the buildings and legacy of Nicodemus. In spite of this designation, Nicodemus has received limited support to address controversial historical

interpretations, limited land preservation efforts, and low visitor number issues, amongst other things (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). For these reasons, I sought to explore the cultural and historical impact of NHS designation in Nicodemus. This study may promote positive social change by drawing attention to the Nicodemus NHS as an underrepresented African American historical resource in need of redevelopment. This study's findings may also aid other similar African American historical locations in need of policy evaluation and/or restructuring.

In this chapter I will provide background information on the historical value of Nicodemus. I will also discuss the preservation policies affecting the Nicodemus NHS. Next I will provide a brief overview for using the complex adaptive systems (CAS) theoretical framework for public policy and collaborative governance initiatives. I will then discuss the fragility of the Nicodemus NHS and the larger issue of under researched African American historical locations. Recent research addressing current issues affecting the Nicodemus NHS will also be discussed. I will then state my study purpose and research questions pertaining to the Nicodemus web and its connections preservation policy outcomes. Further description of the CAS approach, in relation to the Nicodemus web, will also be offered. I will follow this description with pertinent definitions and discussion of my assumptions and the scope, delimitations, limitations, and overall significance of the study.

Background

The rich history of Nicodemus is considered a root factor of this study's topic and overall goals. Preceding the great Exoduster Movement, the early Nicodemus settlers sought a better life there; especially after all they had been through during slavery (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). The Exoduster group consisted of thousands of African Americans who made their way to Kansas and other Western states after the Reconstruction Era of 1865-1877 (Edwards, 2014; Everett, 1986; Gavins, 2015; Kansas City Kansas Community College Cable Channel 17, 2012; Katz, 1971; Suarez, 2014).

Early Nicodemus settlers traveled mainly from the state of Kentucky by train and wagon (Edwards, 2014; Everett, 1986; Kansas City Kansas Community College Cable Channel 17, 2012; Kansas Historical Society, 2014; Katz, 1971; Wigfall, 2014). Upon arrival in Nicodemus, however, many individuals found the living conditions to be extremely challenging (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Kansas City Kansas Community College Cable Channel 17, 2012; National Park Service, 2016c; Wigfall, 2014). The early settlers used dugouts, or cave-like structures for shelter, food was scarce, and the nearest water source was distant. The winters were brutal, and many left in frustration and disappointment.

For the freedmen and freedwomen who endured the harsh living environment, the flourishing of the town Nicodemus was humbling and gratifying (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Kansas City Kansas Community College Cable Channel 17, 2012;

National Park Service, 2016c; Wigfall, 2014). The early settlers created a thriving township, inclusive of churches, a school, grocery and general stores, pharmacies, hotels, liveries, a bank, barbershops, and a gas station. The town had a newspaper and a baseball team. At some point as many as 700 people lived in the Nicodemus township area (Wigfall, 2014).

Over time, the population began to decline after the residents lost their bid for a railroad line (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; National Park Service, 2016c; Wigfall, 2014). This economic loss prompted many residents to relocate to a nearby town, in order to be closer to the rail line. Furthermore, the Nicodemus resident population has continued to decline with time. According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau report (2014), fewer than 40 people lived within the Nicodemus township.

According to the National Park Service (NPS), the Organization of American Historians, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Nicodemus carries themes of “exploration/settlement urbanization, western expansion, social history-civil rights, post-reconstruction, politics/government, commerce, religion” (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008, p. 23). These themes shape the Nicodemus story and shed light on the value of the town. Additionally, the Nicodemus legacy provides grounded purpose for investigating the Nicodemus NHS preservation policy effects.

Currently, Nicodemus resembles a web of physical land and key agents working individually and collaboratively to preserve the legacy of the town (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). One preservation policy that has

affected the Nicodemus web and NHS is the NHPA, (see Appendix B). Although the NHPA focuses more on the initial procedures for protecting historical locations, amongst other things, it was created to acknowledge and preserve significant historical locations that have contributed to U.S. history (NPS, 2013).

The NHPA contributed to the early stages of properly protecting the Nicodemus history through detailed land surveys and the recording of written and oral historical accounts (Everett, 1986). It is also important to recognize the early 1980's partnering of the NPS with education and community organization Nicodemus web agents in conducting the first major in depth scholarly research in Nicodemus (Everett, 1986). These early contributions of the NHPA are pertinent for this study because the NHPA acknowledges the burden of historic preservation on local individuals and organizations and encourages the collaborative role of the federal government in strengthening such initiatives (see Appendix B). It is because of this legislative spirit of partnership the Nicodemus NHS eventually came into existence.

The Nicodemus NHS is operated by the NPS and authorized through the National Historic Landmark (NHL) system. The NPS manages the NHL program which consists of historical sites, structures, buildings, objects, and/or districts (NPS, 2016c). The Nicodemus NHS comprises five buildings of historical significance to the legacy of the town. Despite its legislative status, the Nicodemus NHS, alongside many other African American NHL's, is considered underrepresented within the NHL program structure. According to Ferentinos and Lowe (2008), Nicodemus included and other African

American NHLs are impartially characterized and limited to narrowed themes within this system. These particular implications highlighted issues with historical interpretations, upon which the stories of the African American NHL's and potential locations are not being accurately and abundantly interpreted and promoted.

The overall purpose of the NHS designation was to “preserve, protect, and interpret” (see Appendix C, S.1521, 104th Cong., 1995-1996, Section b1) the Nicodemus story as it relates to the settlement and growth of the town, the Reconstruction Era, and westward expansion. In supporting collaborative initiatives for preservation, and forwarding the collaborative language of the NHPA, the Nicodemus NHS legislation states the usage of cooperative agreements between NPS and “any interested individual, public or private agency, organization, and institution” is encouraged (see Appendix C, S.1521, 104th Cong., 1995-1996, Section 4b). The purpose of the NHS designation and the notation of cooperative partnerships within the policy also compliments the Nicodemus web concept (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). By acknowledging the complex and adaptive operations of the landscape and core constituents that comprise the Nicodemus web, the connections that have already been established can be built upon to improve conditions at the Nicodemus NHS.

The CAS approach involves systematically acknowledging an item by classifying its various parts and mechanisms (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Meek, De Ladurantey, & Newell, 2007; Meek & Lyu, 2010). In this section, I will summarize key findings from studies that have addressed use of CAS in public policy, and non-commercial public

policy marketing. I will also summarize research on the historic struggles of the Nicodemus Township development. This context is essential for understanding the underrepresentation and preservation issues affecting Nicodemus.

The idea of collaborative governance is considered a useful tool to lawmakers and their constituents (Meek, De Ladurantey, and Newell, 20017). Meek, De Ladurantey, and Newell (2007) encouraged the usage CAS and emphasized the benefits of this approach for shared governance and social engagement. To improve public policy outcomes, the authors (2007) suggested that public administrators identify and acknowledge the complex adaptive relationships amongst residents, policy workers, community leaders, and government officials. Their research confirms the purpose of exploring the Nicodemus web to analyze the cultural impact of the preservation policy in Nicodemus. The Nicodemus web can be used a tool to improve policy outcomes at the Nicodemus NHS.

Further contributing to the notion of using the Nicodemus web as a strengthening instrument is the idea of non-commercial public policy marketing. This type of marketing is centered around social engagement, emphasizes community, and encourages cooperative partnerships with government officials (Gross, Poor, Sipos, and Solymossy, 2009). Gross et al. (2009) suggested that public administrators strategically market policies to citizens to create well informed community partners. These authors (2009) emphasized national parks as complex systems of stakeholders, relationships, and programs. They also suggested using non-commercial public policy marketing to aid in

improving national park preservations. The Nicodemus web exemplifies the complex system of NPS constituents, associations, and programs described by Gross et al. (2009). Practicing similar marketing tactics amongst the Nicodemus web members, for the purposes of addressing policy issues in Nicodemus, may contribute better preservation outcomes for the NHS.

One preservation network that seemed to benefit from non-commercial public policy collaboration was associated with the African American Burial Ground National Monument in Manhattan, New York (Blakey, 2010). This location used key community agents to implement NHPA policies. The author emphasized the impact of the unexpected discovery of the African Burial Ground on the surrounding community and residents. The researchers were required ethically by law to engage with the local citizens by included them in their research and preservation plan. In alignment with the complexity of Nicodemus web, Blakey recognized the need for collaborative efforts, amongst the various key agents, in better implementing the policies of the NHPA and preserving the historical African Burial Ground. This article reinforces the value of strategically oriented collaborations for preservation work.

In seeking to stimulate the Nicodemus web, the core agent relationships must first be further evaluated. Bushe and Marshak (2015) offered complex systems as adaptive and living structures. They also highlighted the importance of interpreting local interactions amongst system agents to better understand system wide patterns and outcomes. The special roles of the residents and organizations operating from the center

of the Nicodemus web illustrate these local interactions, as described by the authors (2015). The local interactions amongst the core Nicodemus web agents are impacting the Nicodemus NHS preservation outcomes and a larger system of African American history and preservation. It is for these reasons Bushe and Marshak's (2015) research supports this study's exploration of the Nicodemus web to increase understanding on the current conditions and impact of the preservation policy in Nicodemus.

To better understand the Nicodemus web, it is important to acknowledge the history of determination and the sense of hope amongst African Americans during the Reconstruction Era of 1865-1877 (Williams, 2011). Complementing this notion, Williams (2011) discussed the history of the emancipation proclamation, African American townships, and the migration of freed African American slaves from the south. Highlighting its exclusivity, the author (2011) identified Nicodemus as the sole remaining African American western town founded during the Reconstruction Era. This article reinforces the idea of Nicodemus being a unique historical asset within the NHL system. The promised land of Nicodemus eventually grew into a national landmark and is now a singular source of specific and valuable African American history of its time period. This evaluative study will critically assess the impact of the NHPA and NHS designation to preserve the exclusive and invaluable legacy of Nicodemus.

The delicacy of the Nicodemus township speaks to a larger problem of preservation issues amongst African American historical locations (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). Ferentinos and Lowe (2008) highlighted issues with the NHL program, stressed

the need for further research on and policy implementation related to current and potential African American NHL locations. The authors emphasized the town's historical significance within the NHL system and the need for interpretative improvements. The author's work illustrates the need for analyzing the policy designation outcomes in Nicodemus. My analysis of the Nicodemus NHS will directly contribute to suggestions for further research, as presented by Ferentinos and Lowe (2008).

Analyzing the current conditions in Nicodemus, Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2012) concluded that Nicodemus symbolizes an interconnected network of people, institutions, history, land, and time. The authors (2012) also highlighted the need for improved landscape and legacy preservation in Nicodemus. By acknowledging the fragmented network contributing to the current conditions in Nicodemus, Hoffman Brandt and Zientek's (2012) research contributed a preliminary description of the complexity comprising the Nicodemus community. Additionally, by drawing attention to the need for preservation improvements, the author's (2012) work further supports the need for my evaluation on the historical impact of the NHS designation in Nicodemus.

Also addressing preservation matters, another recent study in Nicodemus suggested the need for policy restructuring for NHL designation procedures (Wigfall, 2014). Mainly, Wigfall (2014) recommended involving educational research partners to survey potential NHL locations, providing easier access to preservation funding, and simplifying the NHL units to scenic, memory, or cultural park categories. The Wigfall (2014) study supports shared policy development for NHL locations and stresses the need

for policy changes within the NHL system. This emphasis on policy restructuring supports the need for shared policy implementation in Nicodemus and the reorganizing of its overall representation within the NHL system.

Edwards (2014) sought various forms of art that could be used to best represent the Nicodemus story, on the grounds that “the culture and history of a community, especially in Nicodemus” are “embedded in [it’s] landscape” (p. 10). In further alluding to the continued fading and small town functioning of Nicodemus, this article utilizes art expression to display the complex Nicodemus identity. By acknowledging the people, land, and community contributing to the legacy of town, this author’s (2014) unique description of the Nicodemus story also ignites the Nicodemus web concept.

Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2012) and Wigfall (2014) labeled Nicodemus as being underrepresented within the vast sea of U.S. history and as a National Historic Site within the NHL system. I could find no studies that focused on the impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus. This lack of research and policy evaluation affects the current preservation conditions and policy outcomes at the Nicodemus NHS (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). Without this specific policy evaluation, there is no way to know if the preservation policies are benefiting or harming national landmarks such as the Nicodemus NHS.

Because of the web’s interconnected relationships and resources, the core constituents play an important role in impacting the NHPA and NHS designation outcomes. By further analyzing the major components of the Nicodemus web, I hope to

provide knowledge that will help the Nicodemus NHS preservation efforts. Also, data from this study may benefit other African American historical locations by providing an in depth analysis of the Nicodemus web and its potential for development.

In addressing these key points, I explored several topics which, according to my review of the literature have been understudied. These topics included the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus and Nicodemus NHS historical legacy preservation and policy efforts. Furthermore, African American NHL historical legacy preservation and policy efforts and the significance of the Nicodemus web for policy implementation are also considered gaps in the literature.

This study is needed in order to improve the preservation of Nicodemus, in better implementing the initial purposes of the NHPA and NHS designation. Although recent research has acknowledged the significance of the Nicodemus web, this study further defines the web, utilizing the CAS approach as a theoretical framework (Gross et al., 2009; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Meek, et. al, 2007). The role of preservation policies and programs are highlighted in maintaining and/or strengthening African American and/or historically marginalized group networks (Laven et al., 2010a; 2010b). With the overall NHPA goal of preserving American history, group memory preservation is a major factor in today's changing times. This study contributes first steps in further connecting all of these noted aspects of the NHPA, NHS designation, and NHL program implications.

Problem Statement

The Nicodemus NHS is seen as delicate and underrepresented within the NHL system (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Williams, 2011). In its most primary essence, the Nicodemus NHS is considered a metaphorical web encompassing landscape, people, and institutions interconnected to a larger African American historical legacy (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). Nicodemus is the single remaining African American western town from the Reconstruction Era (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Williams, 2011). Although the town has unquestionably demonstrated its contributions to American history, the legacy of Nicodemus is not being adequately preserved according to the NHPA goals and NHS designation (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). Therefore, the Nicodemus NHS is considered underrepresented. Also, new changes are being proposed to expand the existing NHL designation to the nearby areas of Nicodemus Township, Kebar, and Wild Horse Township (Reed & Wallace, 2013). Such changes will require innovative methods in adequately preserving these historically significant places.

The NHL program is operated by the NPS, under the authority of the Department of the Interior, to preserve sites, structures, buildings, objects, and/or districts contributing to American history (NPS, 2010). However, recent research of the Nicodemus NHS, tells a story of a dying town in desperate need of interpretive revision and enhanced preservation efforts (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt &

Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). These findings showcase the underrepresentation of Nicodemus within the NHL system.

Aside from the Nicodemus NHS underrepresentation, African American NHL's are impartially characterized and limited to narrowed themes within the NHL system (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008). Furthermore, there is a gap in the current research literature on African American NHL and historical locations. Between the limited NHL themes and the lack of research for African American historical locations, scholars are not properly preserving a significant part of American history. African American NHL and other underrepresented historical locations, such as Nicodemus, should be preserved and interpreted fully for their contributions to the nation. For these reasons this study is apparent, contemporary, applicable, and substantial to the discipline of public policy and the implementation of preservation policies.

Purpose of the Study

In response to these above noted issues, the purpose of this study was to explore the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus, Kansas (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c; see Appendix B and C). The methodology and framework of this qualitative study consisted of an ethnographic approach (Creswell, 2013; Gans, 2010). I used the data from this study to present a themed narrative of the current status and impact of the NHS destination in Nicodemus. Although the Nicodemus NHS was the primary focus of this study, the objective was to

explore the Nicodemus web as a significant factor impacting the legislation outcomes (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012).

Research Questions

I sought to answer the following questions in this investigation:

RQ1. How has the NHPA and NHS designation impacted the cultural and historical legacy of Nicodemus?

RQ2. How has the NHS policy designation positively or undesirably affected the Nicodemus township?

RQ3. What are the roles of the landscape, key individuals, community, and government partners in contributing to policy outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS?

RQ4. What are the Nicodemus stakeholders' policy improvement recommendations?

Theoretical Framework

The necessities of partnerships and cooperative arrangements are highly stressed within the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS policies (see Appendix B and C). The complex adaptive systems approach (CAS) was the theoretical framework used to evaluate the cultural and historical impact of these policies in Nicodemus (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Meek, De Ladurantey, & Newell, 2007; Meek & Lyu, 2010). This method entails thoroughly perceiving an entity by categorizing its smaller, interconnected components. Deriving mainly from ecological studies, the CAS technique is thought to be

multidisciplinary, as it has proven to apply to many areas of life. To date, existing literature on CAS for public policy heavily supports concepts of networked locations, organizations, and persons continuously modifying to new policies and developing new shared social patterns as a result (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Desouza, 2011; Meek, De Ladurantey, & Newell, 2007; Meek & Lyu 2010; Seymour & Levin, 2015). Policy issues are considered complex due to the many entities involved, performing independently and interacting with other policy constituents.

Defined in its primary form, the CAS approach involves adaptive social systems that are composed of interconnected agents (Miller & Page, 2007). Such systems are inclusive of many components, in order to be measured complex and adaptive (Johnson, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). Chief to the CAS configuration, are the interactions amongst the agents. These relationships are usually the result of a common physical location, membership to a group, or interest in information. These interrelated associations are believed to form a network or web of agents (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009).

The Nicodemus web is an important feature in the implementation of the NHS policies (Abels, 2012; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; see Appendix B and C; Wigfall, 2014). Recognizing the importance of the Nicodemus web entails understanding the shared energies assembling widespread legislative efforts and outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS. Because the constituent roles of the Nicodemus web are presently uncharacterized, the interactions within and performance of the web is lessened. This

current state of the Nicodemus web is directly impacting the dynamics of the preservation policy outcomes in the town (Johnson, 2009; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007).

This dissertation builds upon the notion of the Nicodemus web, by using the data to identify relevant units, relationships, and available resources within the web, as supported by the CAS approach (Capra, 1996; Seymour & Levin, 2015). I used this information to describe and narrate the data findings. Finally, the connections between the Nicodemus web, preservation efforts, and the impact of the legislation, are presented in this study's results.

Conceptual Framework

Although the Nicodemus web has been mentioned in recent research, further analysis of the web is needed (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Wigfall, 2014). The concept of the *Nicodemus web* has been previously termed to describe a simulated network model of Nicodemus partners and resources (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009). In this way, the Nicodemus web referred to a computational and figurative model used for exploring and further characterizing the Nicodemus network. For the purposes of this study, the term Nicodemus web is defined as the actual network of landscape, individuals, and institutions connecting Nicodemus to a greater shared system of African American history. When referring to the Nicodemus web

computational and figurative model, by Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2012), the term Nicodemus web model is used.

The CAS concept was significant for the analysis of the impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus, as it provided detailed insight for exploring the varied interconnected elements of the Nicodemus web (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Meek, De Ladurantey, & Newell, 2007; see Appendix B and C; Seymour & Levin, 2015). This approach highlights the complexity of the Nicodemus community and stakeholders, as it relates to the varying relationship levels and groups, organizational structuring, and NHS policy outcomes.

Exploring the complexities of the Nicodemus web showcased the impact of the NHPA and NHS designation, by identifying the underlining issues contributing to current policy outcomes in Nicodemus (see Appendix B and C). Such underlining issues are the historical legacy preservation and policy efforts in Nicodemus and other African American and/or historically marginalized group NHL locations.

Nature of the Study

I used qualitative methods, specifically an ethnographic design, to explore the Nicodemus NHS. The qualitative method was chosen for this study for its ability to provide extensive data for complex and multidimensional populations (Tracy, 2010). Qualitative research can deliver vast amounts of cultural and historical information. Finally, this method is known for highlighting connections between policy and constituents.

In implementing the qualitative method, ethnography was chosen for its emphasis on cultural exploration (Gans, 2010). With the ethnography approach, small or hidden societies and/or ethnic populations are examined. Creswell (2013) acknowledges the usage of ethnography to advocate for underrepresented groups in society. Such research usually focuses on concerns of authority, regulation, liberation, discrimination, governance, and oppression. This study explored the Nicodemus web alongside Nicodemus NHS policy outcomes with the goal of encouraging further research on underrepresented historical communities and generating more effective public policies in this area (NPS, 2016c). Additionally, issues of regulation, liberation, discrimination, governance, and oppression are all related to the Nicodemus NHS either historically or currently.

For the ethnographic application, I interviewed 11 Nicodemus web constituents to further comprehend the impact of the NHS designation and the role of the Nicodemus web for policy and preservation results. I examined the data collected from the interviews and organized it into themes describing the cultural and historical impact of the NHS designation in Nicodemus. Also after the data was collected, the concept of the Nicodemus web was further explored by identifying pertinent elements, relationships, and existing resources within the web, as supported by the CAS approach. Finally, I analyzed on the historical legacy of Nicodemus, in relation to current preservation conditions and policy implications.

Definitions

Complex adaptive systems (CAS): The CAS framework suggests adaptive organisms that are composed of interconnected entities (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). Primary to the CAS structure, are the interactions amongst the agents. These relationships usually stem from a common physical location, membership to a group, or interest in information. The dynamics of the varying relations are thought to form a network or web of agents. The Nicodemus web is a complex adaptive system (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009; Seymour & Levin, 2015).

Computational modeling: A leading technique for illustrating and exploring complex adaptive systems (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2007). Computational modeling for CAS entails the utilization of simulation modeling, to highlight CAS network realities, interconnected dynamics, and possibilities for improvement (Miller & Page, 2007). An example of computational modeling for the Nicodemus NHS are the partnership wheels, logic trees, and timelines depicting the Nicodemus web model presented by Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2012).

Cultural impact: The NPS defines “cultural” as customs, beliefs, and social bodies (National Park Service, 2016d; National Park Service, 2016e). The cultural impact of the NHS designation relates to the impact on the customs, beliefs, and social bodies connected to the Nicodemus township and legacy.

Emergence: Complex adaptive systems can exhibit emergent actions at any time spontaneously (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009). Emergent behaviors can alternate between order and disorder on their own accord. The concept of emergence validates the adaptive possibilities of complex systems. I explored emergence within the Nicodemus web during the data collection phase of this study (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Seymour & Levin, 2015).

Feedback: Feedback information includes remembrances from the past or added forms of data flowing within the system (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007). This information is transferred between agents within the system. Agents adapt behaviors in accordance with feedback information. These behavioral changes can alter the dynamics of the system as a whole. In characterizing the Nicodemus web as a complex adaptive system, previous and current feedback data nourished into the web is relevant in describing and modifying the outcomes of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Seymour & Levin, 2015).

Historical impact: The NPS defines “history” as the understanding of “how people of the past have shaped today” (National Park Service, 2016e). The historical impact of the Nicodemus NHS policy is its influence on the Nicodemus story and legacy.

Nicodemus web: The literal complex adaptive system of physical landscape, individuals, and institutions connected by the Nicodemus Township, ancestral

relationships, and shared interests of African American history (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009).

Nicodemus web model: A simulated network model of Nicodemus partners and resources depicted in recent research conducted prior to this study (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009). The Nicodemus web model highlighted and better characterized the Nicodemus network connections.

Public policy as a complex adaptive systems (CAS): Public policy identified as CAS includes locations, organizations, and individuals modifying to new policies and refining new social behavioral patterns as a result (Desouza, 2011). Policy issues are considered complex by the varying stakeholders and their dynamic relationships. With this characterization, utilizing CAS for evaluating policy outcomes is most appropriate (Desouza, 2011; Innes & Booher, 1999). Recognizing the complexities of the NHL designation in Nicodemus, requires the acknowledgement of the Nicodemus web members and their relationships (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Seymour & Levin, 2015; Wigfall, 2014).

Assumptions

Two main assumptions were necessary to confirm the meaningfulness of this study, starting with the labeling of the Nicodemus web as a complex adaptive system or CAS (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009; Seymour & Levin, 2015). This first assumption provided reason for further evaluation on the structure and activities of the Nicodemus web for policy

outcomes. Grounded in theory, the concept of the Nicodemus web as a CAS is highly visible in Hoffman Brandt and Zientek's (2012) Nicodemus web model (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009).

Aside from the characterization of the Nicodemus web as a CAS, the current disorganization of the Nicodemus web was also an applicable assumption for this study (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). According to recent research, the Nicodemus web is believed to be unorganized and lacking needed improved partnership efforts (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Wigfall, 2014).

These assumptions were essential for exploring the impact of the policy designation in Nicodemus (see Appendix B and C). Comprehending the complexity of the Nicodemus web was vital for not only exploring the impact of the preservation legislation in Nicodemus, but also to improve preservation outcomes in the town. These assumptions of the Nicodemus web provided rich data results for the Nicodemus NHS that are desperately needed.

Scope and Delimitations

The research problem of this study entails several specific elements of the NHS designation in Nicodemus (NPS, 2016c). The focus on the Nicodemus web is presented to evaluate the NHL policies and provide preservation improvements for Nicodemus (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c). Highlighting the gap in the literature, as compared to the delicacy of the Nicodemus NHS

and other African American historical locations, is necessary in emphasizing the significance of this study and the need for increased research. Finally, the underrepresentation of African American NHL locations is stressed in order to connect the Nicodemus NHS and other African American historical locations to a larger system of shared inequality.

Populations excluded from this study include, but are not limited to, immediate family members, non-African American rural towns in Kansas, and NHL locations not associated with African American history. Immediate family members were excluded from this study to avoid researcher bias (Chavez, 2008; Platt, 1981). In addressing ethical concerns, I only interviewed extended family members, and only because it was necessary. The other exclusions were essential in order to focus all research for this study where it is most needed---on African American NHL locations and other historical places (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008). Recent inquiry has shown the need for further study on such locations to reduce the gap in the current knowledgebase.

By narrowing the focus of the problems in Nicodemus and the need for increased research on African American historical locations, this study will aid the Nicodemus NHS in improving policy preservation efforts and outcomes. The Nicodemus web currently exists informally, yet this dynamic structure of key agents has the potential to maximize its strength through policy implementation and restructuring (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Capra, 1996; Wigfall, 2014). This study provides a stage for further development of the Nicodemus web. In better perceiving the Nicodemus

NHS, other African American historical locations will be given a paradigm for preservation improvement. Finally, the results from this study may promote growth within the NHL system and shared change within the American society as a whole, as it pertains to the preservation of African American historical locations.

Limitations

The main limitations of this study include access to all members of the Nicodemus web and the lack of research for Nicodemus and other African American historical locations (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). Although the qualitative interviews with selected members of the Nicodemus web provided a mere snapshot of the entire status of the web, it serves as a platform for further research of the web, as it pertains to the policy preservation results in Nicodemus. Finally, to address the lack of literature for the Nicodemus NHS and other African American NHL and historical locations, this study will maximize the current literature by emphasizing the delicacy and preservation needs of such places (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008).

Potential researcher biases that could have influenced this study include, my ancestral connections to Nicodemus, prior knowledge of NHS designation outcomes, and working with extended family members to obtain data. Because I am ancestrally tied to Nicodemus and have previous exposure to the preservation conditions, great caution was taken in excluding past assumptions. It is understood that past assumptions of the Nicodemus NHS were not grounded in theory or research, but my own personal opinion

and hearsay. Moreover, because of my personal connection to Nicodemus, bias was avoided by remaining professional and separating personal relationships and past experiences with study participants.

Significance

This proposed dissertation will make an original contribution by being the first known research on the cultural and historic impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; see Appendix B and C). Recent studies on Nicodemus have focused on the town's history, artistic expression, the land and structural outcomes, archives and artifacts, and visitor numbers. (Edwards, 2015; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). This study adds to this growing wealth of knowledge by providing much needed information on the impact of the legislation as it pertains to the cultural outcomes of the Nicodemus web and historic preservation of the Nicodemus NHS (see Appendix B and C). Lastly, this research can lead to greater awareness of the historical legacy of Nicodemus.

In addressing the need for further research on preservation efforts and outcomes for African American National Historic Landmarks, this study will directly contribute to recommendations for further research presented by the NPS, the Organization of American Historians, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). According to these recommendations, African American historical locations are fairly represented within the NHL system. An in-depth analysis

of the noted Nicodemus web can improve policy outcomes for Nicodemus and for other African American NHL locations.

In addition to contributing to the knowledge base, this study will promote professional and social change applications in further developing the Nicodemus NHS (NPS, 2016c). Because of the dwindling number of Nicodemus residents who serve as core connections to Nicodemus visitors, descendants living outside of the area, and other external entities, it is relevant to understand the Nicodemus resident's unique roles, relationships, and needs in maintaining positive and desirable policy preservation results (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Edwards, 2015; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). To display the varying roles played in implementing and sustaining the collaborative ideals of the NHPA and NHS designation, I highlighted the interconnectedness of the Nicodemus web in the results discussion.

Implications for positive social change will be produced by adhering to the original policy goals of strengthening relationships amongst the Nicodemus web entities, such as government officials and town residents. Improving these associations will promote better implementation of the NHS legislation in Nicodemus. Such information will also serve as useful for other African American group networks that may be facing similar issues as Nicodemus. Additionally, this study will further define the cultural and historical results of the NHS designation in Nicodemus. Ultimately, first steps will be provided in properly acknowledging and strategically coordinating the Nicodemus web for the purposes of improving preservation policy outcomes (Laven et al., 2010a; 2010b).

Summary

As shown by this introduction, Nicodemus, Kansas, is truly a gem in African American history (Everett, 1986; Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Katz, 1971; NPS, 2016c; Wigfall, 2014). Founded by former slaves, this amazing settlement was once a flourishing African American community. Nicodemus is the single remaining African American western town from the Reconstruction Era (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Williams, 2011). Although Nicodemus has indisputably established its offerings to American history, the guiding legislation is not adequately preserving the legacy of the town (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014).

This qualitative study explored the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; see Appendix B and C; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c). In further defining and characterizing the Nicodemus web, I will categorize relevant features, interactions, and existing means within the web, as supported by the CAS approach. I will also provide remarks on the historical legacy and preservation efforts of the Nicodemus NHS, in relation to noted policy implications in the results discussion. Finally, an in-depth literature review was performed, as follows, to provide foundational support for the goals of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Nicodemus NHS is considered fragile within a larger system of controversially interpreted African American history (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Williams, 2011). Contributing to Nicodemus' underrepresentation is a lack of collaborative initiatives (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). The Nicodemus community has not maximized partnership building efforts in its attempt to preserve the Nicodemus legacy, according to Hoffman Brandt & Zientek (2012) and Wigfall (2014). Acknowledging that the appropriate partnership opportunities do exist, and some of which have been established, these researchers suggest the need to further develop these partnerships in improving the Nicodemus NHS designation outcomes (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). By building upon the relationships that already exist, the Nicodemus web could contribute resources, volunteers, educational institutions, businesses, community organizations, and much more for the purposes of sustaining a stronger foundation and representation in preserving the Nicodemus legacy.

The underrepresentation of Nicodemus is endorsed by limited historical themes, indolent preservation efforts, under told stories, a lack of policy support, distrust of government officials, and fragmented historical African American communities (Blakey, 2010; Brunswig et al., 2013; Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Inwood, 2009; Ng, 2011; Wigfall, 2014). Finally, there is a major gap in the literature on African American NHL and historical locations in general. In providing more information on the understudied Nicodemus NHS, I hope to contribute to the

literature base for policy suggestions and African American NHL and historical locations preservation.

After discussing my literature search strategy, I will explain my use of CAS in analyzing the Nicodemus web and how it may be used to address the policy issues in Nicodemus (see Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Meek, 2007). In addition, I analyzed existing research to explore previous recommendations for addressing the noted Nicodemus NHS problems (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014).

In further emphasizing the significance and potential of the Nicodemus web, I will provide supporting literature on partnership networks, collaborative governance, and National Heritage Area networks (e.g. Laven et al., 2010; Weddell et al., 2008). The underrepresentation of Nicodemus and other African American NHL locations within the NHL system will also be highlighted (Blakey, 2010; Brunswig et al., 2013; Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Inswood, 2009; Ng, 2011; Wigfall, 2014). Finally, a brief summary of the purpose and implementation attempts of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus will be emphasized (H. R. 3256, 1995-1996; NHPA as Amended, 1994; NPS, 2013).

Literature Research Strategies

I conducted the literature review by using several library databases and search engines, many of which I accessed via the Walden University Library. The primary

databases that I used were SocIndex/ Full Text, Political Science Complete: A Sage Full Text Collection, ProQuest Central, New Thoreau, Political Science Complete, Business Source Complete, Science Direct, Google Scholar, and the Library of Congress. I found literature on qualitative methodologies, the Nicodemus NHS, complex adaptive systems, policy implementation networks, historical preservation, and the NHPA. In addition, by searching NPS websites, I was able to find information pertaining to the current conditions in Nicodemus, an overview of the NHL program, the purpose of the NHPA, Nicodemus NHS designation, and the historical significance of the town.

I also searched several journals to find content on African American history and policy. These electronic journals include *African American Review*, *Black Collegian*, *Civil War History*, *Berkeley Journal of African-American Law & Policy*, *Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy*, and *The Journal of African American History*. The key words in researching these journals were complex adaptive systems, partnerships, policy networks, collaborative governance, NHL, NPS, NHS, landmark preservation, Nicodemus Kansas, Nicodemus NHS, African American Reconstruction Era, African American NHL and ethnographic approach/research, grounded theory approach/research, and qualitative approach/research. (See Appendix A for a comprehensive account of the complete literature review key words and search criteria that I used).

Gaps in the Literature

In conducting this literature review search, I discovered there is minimal scholarly data on preserving African American NHL and historical locations (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). Further confirming the findings of Ferentinos & Lowe (2008), I also found few research studies on Nicodemus and the Nicodemus NHS. This specific lack of data on the Nicodemus NHS policy designation, implementation, and evaluation directly contributes to the underrepresentation of Nicodemus within the NPS system.

The underrepresentation is another area of study that is in need of additional investigation (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). The Nicodemus NHS is an emblem of African American history (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012), and I believe that its story should be preserved as such. However, Nicodemus and many other African American NHL and historical locations, are underrepresented in the sharing of their stories (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). In response to this issue, Ferentinos & Lowe (2008) have called for further investigation of these historical places.

Further study on NHL location evaluations in general is necessary as evaluation practices vary and knowledge of best evaluation practices is not publically available (Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009). The NPS has its own NHL evaluation practices, yet the specific parameters of these evaluations are unknown. The missing data of evaluation practices of African American NHL locations is further promoting the underrepresentation of such places.

One evaluative initiative I found was the Long-Range Interpretive Plan (2009). This plan was created by the NPS and several other key Nicodemus web agents to provide shared goals for the Nicodemus NHS. However, since its completion, all of the partners who helped create the plan have not necessarily participated in implementing it. Additionally, the current outcomes of the plan goals are not known.

Besides the missing research on African American NHL locations, there is a need to study the impact of the NHPA on the Nicodemus community. While this topic is very broad, the narrowed scope of the NHPA's impact on preserving African American history is a much needed focus area. This information alone could truly aid the NPS in improving its NHL program designation procedures for the sake of preservation and sustaining partnerships for African American NHL's and potential locations.

Recent research loosely describes the Nicodemus web; however, further analysis of the web is needed (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Wigfall, 2014). For this study, the term Nicodemus web is seen as the literal network of landscape, people, and institutions connecting the Nicodemus NHS to a greater shared system of African American history. Because this is a fairly new conceptual framework, based on theoretical CAS foundations and the proposed Nicodemus web model, as presented by Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2012), there is a significant gap in the literature on the Nicodemus web. Additionally through my investigation of the Nicodemus web, I will obtain valuable data on the Nicodemus NHS policy outcomes.

A System of Complexity

Policy issues are considered complex due to the many agents involved, performing autonomously and intermingling with other policy agents (Desouza, 2011; Meek, De Ladurantey, & Newell, 2007; Meek & Lyu 2010). The CAS approach involves adaptive social systems that are made of interconnected agents (Miller & Page, 2007). These systems have many components that define them as complex and adaptive (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). The interactions amongst the agents are the primary principle of such systems. These interactions are caused by common physical locations, membership to a group, or interest in information and form a network or web of agents (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009).

The Nicodemus web is highly significant in implementing policy designation outcomes (Abels, 2012; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). For this study, the term *Nicodemus web* is seen as the literal web of landscape, individuals, and institutions connecting the Nicodemus NHS to a greater shared system of African American history. Recognizing the worth of the Nicodemus web means understanding the collective dynamisms implementing legislative efforts and outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS. Because the constituent roles of the Nicodemus web are presently uncharacterized, the interactions and performance of the web is deteriorated. This is impacting the dynamics of the preservation policy outcomes in the town (Bushe &

Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007).

Investigating the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA collaborative goals and NHS designation in Nicodemus is related to the CAS approach due to the many complexities of public policy (Desouza, 2011; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Innes & Booher, 1999; see Appendix B and C). This assessment challenges and builds upon the CAS framework by applying the Nicodemus web and its future possibilities. In my analyzing how the NHS policy has benefited or harmed Nicodemus, the Nicodemus web served as a major source of data collection. I tested the CAS theory by using the Nicodemus web for evaluation efforts, but also for desired improvements. In the end, this study will greatly add to the CAS literature knowledgebase. Finally, in defining, evaluating, and characterizing the Nicodemus web as a complex adaptive system, I easily attained suggestions for policy improvements.

Theoretical Framework

In appropriately exploring the Nicodemus web, I used the complex adaptive systems (CAS) theoretical framework for this study (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Capra, 1996; Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009; Seymour & Levin, 2015). Described in its simplest form, the CAS approach entails adaptive social systems that are framed by interconnected agents. Such systems are composed of many ingredients, in order to be considered complex and adaptive (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). Principal to the CAS

composition, are the relationships amongst the agents, which are usually due to some sort of common physical location, membership to a group, or interest in information. These interconnected associations are thought to form a network or web of agents (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009).

The behaviors of the agents can be impacted by current and past feedback information that is fed into the system (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Seymour & Levin, 2015). Feedback information can be described as memories from the past or other forms of information circulating within the system. This information can be given or received amongst agents at any time within the system. Causing behavioral patterns to emerge, the agents can adapt their behaviors according to the feedback information. Such adaptations can either improve or weaken the system performance, thus altering the dynamics of the system as a whole. The structure of the system can also impact behaviors; whereas organized structures may be easier to maintain compared to unorganized structures.

In further supporting the significance of communications within a complex adaptive system, Bushe and Marshak (2015) highlighted the system-wide impact of local agent relationships and operations. Intentional and purposeful communication efforts amongst individuals and organizations who hold key roles within the system can greatly impact the system structure and outcomes. This practice of self-reflection and mindfulness requires attention towards the core variables within a system in order to better understand seemingly system-wide chaotic results.

To exemplify the influence of feedback within a system, Capra (1996) presented a community that learns from its behavioral errors by using lively network communications. Such a community experiences the consequences of their mistake(s) by witnessing the spread of the effects throughout the network and back to its original birthplace. This example promotes the notion that the community has the adaptive ability to self-regulate and organize to improve its circumstances. The CAS approach includes the noted systems being considered *open* and *living*, meaning they can be easily influenced by their environment and can adapt according to feedback information (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009).

Another important ingredient of CAS is the idea of emergence (Johnson, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). Complex adaptive systems can display emergent behaviors at any time, spontaneously (Johnson, 2009). Such behaviors can move from order to disorder on their own consensus. The concept of emergence further validates the adaptive possibilities of such systems. It should also be noted that the CAS approach is considered modern and multidisciplinary; as a result, this theoretical framework has struggled in gaining central definitive terms (Mitchell, 2007). Finally, most CAS researchers support further exploration of its proposed concepts (Capra, 1996; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009).

In consideration of the key ingredients of CAS, computational modeling is considered a chief method for characterizing and exploring complex adaptive systems (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2007). A model in the

framework of science is a basic illustration of some existent phenomenon (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Mitchell, 2007). Models are used to further comprehend what is being scientifically observed.

The modeling technique can range in scientific, computational, and or literary measures, depending upon the specific needs of the modeling social system. Computational modeling for CAS involves the usage of simulation modeling, to display CAS network realities, interactions, and possibilities for improvement (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Miller & Page, 2007). Computational modeling for CAS simulates an expanded perception of the numerous interconnected dynamics needed to fully comprehend social systems, such as the Nicodemus web. It can also offer practical means to investigate the roots of such systems.

Complex Adaptive Systems: An Interdisciplinary Approach

The CAS approach can be seen as one with interdisciplinary foundations (Anderson, 1999; Capra, 1996; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). Applying to the fields of ecology, biology, physics, metaphysics, ethics, and politics, amongst others, elements of the CAS approach can be traced back to early theories of motion, when Aristotle explored the recognized systems of logic and their unifying agents (Capra, 1996). Well into the 17th century, concepts of dynamic systems emerged from observed structures that could alternate, the exploration of microscopic performances of system agents, and the calculations of agent behaviors (Capra, 1996; Mitchell, 2009). As principle founder of the science of dynamics, Isaac Newton

developed the laws of classical mechanics and provided foundational support to the eventual creation of the CAS approach (Mitchell, 2009). This development is mainly due to its contributions of kinematics, which described how things move, and further defined the dynamics of why agents obey such laws.

Building upon these classical origins, the interest and further exploration of chaos began to emerge in the 19th century (Capra, 1996; Mitchell, 2009). The concept of chaos is believed to have contributed significantly to the development of modern complexity theories (Capra, 1996; Johnson, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). While it is unclear of who first acknowledged chaotic systems, Henri Poincare is seen as a key theorist in utilizing the chaos approach to predict weather patterns (Capra, 1996; Mitchell, 2009). In this notion, chaotic systems are seen as being dependent upon initial conditions (Johnson, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). These systems encompass a variety of unknowns and can produce vast miscalculations.

Besides the foundational support of chaos for complexity theories, discoveries in microbiology also heavily influenced CAS concepts (Capra, 1996). In its earliest days, the field of microbiology provided revelations of deeply complex microscopic living organisms existing within the known reality. Greatly contributing to CAS, the field of ecology emerged as a “study of the earth household” (Capra, 1996, p. 32). Parallel to concepts of organismic communities, ecology eventually became the science of relationships between organisms and their adjoining environment.

Roaring in the 1920s was the study of quantum physics, which over time became known as the source of all complexities (Capra, 1996; Johnson, 2009). Quantum physicists proposed that everything in the known universe is composed of tiny quantum particles of light energy. These particles are not visible to the naked eye, rather they are seen as whole matter, thus giving a false perception of the true reality.

It was not until later in the 20th century, that terms of complexity were prominently used to explore and describe societal systems (Capra, 1996; Mitchell, 2009). It was during this time that the term “system” was first used to describe living organisms and social structures (Capra, 1996). This concept eventually became known as systems thinking, which entailed exploring whole vital properties arising from interconnections between its varied parts. The idea behind this concept noted the root meaning of the word “system” as being “to place together” (Capra, 1996, p. 27).

In further supporting systems thinking, the general systems theory emerged after World War II (Anderson, 1999; Capra, 1996; Mitchell, 2009). This theory was relevant to numerous empirical disciplines, was considered a common science of completeness, and explored systematized aggregates and chaotic events. It was also during this time that cybernetics, a science exploring patterns of communication, information feedback loops, and complex systems arose. Both of these schools of thought resulted from World War II military research. Furthermore, they each provided substantial modern foundational support for concepts in complexity theory.

By the 1950s and 1960s, systems thinking became highly advantageous within the fields of engineering and business management (Capra 1996; Mitchell, 2009). As industrial initiatives became progressively complex with the advancements of new biological, communication, and electronic technologies, managers and engineers alike had to handle immense singular components and their impact on both the physical and organizational systems (Capra, 1996). Facing these issues gave birth to the concepts of systems engineering, systems analysis, and systematic management. Systems engineering involved the prediction of emergent properties within a system and understanding its varied parts to produce efficient products. System analysis, a method of strategic thinking, entailed looking at an entire problem as a whole, in order to compare and produce the best possible outcomes. Finally, systematic management included tackling complex organizational problems with a systems oriented approach.

In addition to these modern conceptual approaches to CAS, was the Gaia theory (Capra, 1996). This theory perceived the planet earth as a self-organizing system, consisting of interconnected living parts. This idea of the earth as a living system, sustained by the continuous movement of energy and matter, ultimately became an accepted reality. The development of the Gaia theory significantly strengthened the notion of life being systematic in microscopic, societal, and global terms.

The CAS approach possesses interdisciplinary origins in the fields of ecology, biology, physics, and metaphysics (Anderson, 1999; Capra, 1996; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). In contemporary times, CAS has been linked to ethics,

politics, economic systems, mathematics, sociology, artificial life, engineering, and business organization, amongst others (Anderson, 1999; Capra, 1996; Innes & Booher, 1999; Meek, et. al, 2007). Although there have been many theories that have provided extensive foundational support for CAS, more research is needed in the specific area of using CAS for public policy (Anderson, 1999; Capra, 1996; Innes & Booher, 1999; Meek, et. al, 2007).

By using CAS for the Nicodemus NHS policy investigation, I will contribute much needed research on CAS for public policy (Anderson, 1999; Capra, 1996; Innes & Booher, 1999; Meek, et. al, 2007). I will mainly achieve this through my analysis of various known key agents and agent groups comprising the Nicodemus web. My research findings may encourage current and potential Nicodemus web agents to further evaluate their role and impact within the web for the purposes of sustaining a stronger foundation in preserving the Nicodemus legacy.

Shifting the Worldview Perception

Although the CAS approach is fairly new and still under exploration for central terms, scholars generally accepted several major propositions (Anderson, 1999; Capra, 1996; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). One of the most prevalent suggestions supporting CAS is the idea that today's issues cannot be assumed in isolation, rather they should be comprehended as systematic complications (Capra, 1996; Johnson, 2009). Perceiving the world as such necessitates a major transference in the

worldview awareness of our reality. It is believed that systematic insight can provide improved sustainable outcomes.

Capra (1996) gave an analogy exemplifying this perception, describing it in terms of a network of branches, sticks, leaves, and trunk being called a *tree*. When asked to describe or draw a tree, one will include most of these elements, and yet exclude the tree roots. The issue here is the significance of the roots, being the most extensive fragment of a tree. Additionally, tree roots are interconnected in an underground network with roots from other trees. Therefore, what one defines as a tree is a matter of perception.

The tree analogy supports the usage of CAS for understanding networks, such as exploring the Nicodemus web to understand the impact of the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS designation (Capra, 1996; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Meek, 2007). In recognizing the Nicodemus web, for the purposes of strengthening and using its expansive interconnected roots, some Nicodemus NHS policy practices and outcomes could be favorably enhanced (Capra, 1996; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Meek, 2007). Perceiving the Nicodemus web as such must be embracive of an extreme shift in the comprehension of the Nicodemus NHS (Capra, 1996; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014).

The significance of patterns and structures is also considered a major premise of CAS (Capra, 1996; Johnson, 2009). Johnson (2009) suggested the existence of a universal pattern of life lying someplace in between patterns of total order and disorder. These patterns are believed to be produced by agents of neither total systematic nor total

randomness. Identifying human beings as agents of such caliber, Johnson (2009) places humans in the place of middle ground, existing within a never ending network of complete order and disorder.

In further supporting Johnson's (2009) claims, Capra (1996) proposed the fundamental criteria for living systems to include organized patterns, structures, and processes. The formation of relationships that define the system's features create the patterns of such systems. These patterns of organization essentially generate the physical structure of the system (Capra, 1996). The actions taken to organize the patterns serve as the actual life process of the system. Perceiving the notion of humans existing in between order and disorder and these 3 dimensions of living systems further exemplify and describe the proposed Nicodemus web as an actual living system existing amidst the impacts of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus (Capra, 1996; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Meek, 2007). By acknowledging and further defining the Nicodemus web, in this way, the patterns and structure of the web could be used to generate improvements for the town and its constituents.

In its broadest definition, the Nicodemus web consists of landscape, individuals, and institutional bodies interconnected to a multifaceted system of African American history (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). The landscape of Nicodemus is a part of this web because it serves as a living place that will deteriorate without conservation efforts enacted by preservation policy and fellow members of the Nicodemus web. Also, the few remaining Nicodemus residents, some of

whom, are the descendants of early Nicodemus settlers (Kansas City Kansas Community College Cable Channel 17, 2012), are the center of this Nicodemus web. These individuals serve as core connections to the town. They maintain relationships with Nicodemus descendants living outside of the area, historical preservation societies, the NPS and other government officials, religious organizations, educational institutions, and other historical African American townships who are all considered partners of Nicodemus. These agents are interconnected through the complex and adaptive Nicodemus web.

Another major assumption of CAS relevant in exploring the Nicodemus web is the idea that feedback information can create some sort of order in a chaotic system (Johnson, 2009). Feedback information can be generated within a system in various forms and can be presented in the usage of memory. In addition, feedback information has the power to stimulate a complex system on many levels (Johnson, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). In considering the Nicodemus web as a complex adaptive system, previous and current feedback information fed into the web is relevant for defining the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA collaborative partnership goals and Nicodemus NHS designation purposes.

As a CAS model, the Nicodemus web should be further explored and characterized, to identify subgroups and key constituents within the web that are capable of birthing desired improvements for the implementation of the preservation policy in Nicodemus (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Johnson, 2009;

Mitchell, 2009; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c). By using feedback information to produce a sense of order within a complex adaptive system, Johnson (2009) presented tweaking subgroups within the system. As it may not be possible to obtain direct access to all agents, it is very probable to ingest subgroups with necessary feedback information to breed the desired modifications within the system. This feedback approach also compliments Bushe and Marshak (2015), who stressed the significance of local interactions amongst agents and the system-wide impact of such happenings. These findings suggest that strategically using feedback information for the Nicodemus web may improve preservation policy outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS.

Another useful CAS approach, computational modeling, is considered a trademark of modern science and a foremost technique for illustrating and discovering complex adaptive systems, such as the Nicodemus web (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2007). Miller and Page (2007) proposed computational modeling to be logically appropriate for exploring systems categorized by dynamic forces and intermingling constituents. Therefore, in building computational models depicting frameworks such as the Nicodemus web, complex adaptive systems are perceived with greater flexibility and prospects (Miller & Page, 2007).

Recent research by Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2012) described a Nicodemus web model complete of partnership wheels, logic trees, and timelines. These prototypes were used to envision Nicodemus as a multidimensional historic site. The partnership

wheels systematized establishments by thematic associations and time frames. One example included organizing a visual replication of other similar African American townships related to Nicodemus and the Reconstruction Era, which in turn created access to more research charges on issues correlated to and impacting Nicodemus.

Next, the logic trees displayed the dynamic relationships of the Nicodemus NHS. They were used to calculate the multilayered relationships amongst the organizations, people, and surrounding community of the Nicodemus NHS. Logic trees can be used to address common issues of keeping key constituents informed when they are not physically present.

Finally, the Nicodemus web timeline models highlighted the economic forces and the evolution of the Nicodemus Township (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). In addition, interpretive relationships were depicted. These researchers commended the NPS for their current usage of timelines to interpret other historic sites. They recommended the growth of timeline usage as a research method to spread the interpretive range of the parks. By merging timelines with logic trees, Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2012) proposed an improved comprehension of the complex relationships and necessary partnerships needed to further develop park sites.

Concluding these stated major proposals in shifting perceptions of the worldview are the potentials of using the CAS approach for public policy (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007). Johnson (2009) recommended further research of CAS could benefit across disciplines and fields. This author (2009) also suggested many policy makers are not

aware of the complexity of policy matters and could benefit from increasing CAS comprehension. An improved acknowledgement of CAS for preservation policy makers and particularly the NHL program could produce increased desirable outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS.

Complementing Johnson's assumptions, Miller and Page (2007) proposed that CAS research should encompass extravagant replicas characterizing agent dynamics. Simulating these dynamics would present opportunities for new dimensions of societal conduct. Because this study will explore the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus by investigating and further defining the Nicodemus web, the utilization and understanding of the CAS approach for policy makers will be further solidified (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Johnson, 2009; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c).

Complex Public Policy, Local Governments, and Tourism

In researching previous CAS applications related to this study, themes of public policy, local governments, and tourism emerged from the current literature knowledge base (Abels, 2012; Baggio, Scott, & Cooper, 2010; Desouza, 2011; Innes & Booher, 1999). Public policy as a CAS, being the most relevant for the sake of this study, is indicative of the complex adaptive systems comprised of environments, institutions, and individuals adjusting to legislation and cultivating new communal behavioral patterns as a result (Desouza, 2011). As with the Nicodemus web, legislative problems are seen as complex due to the many constituents involved, behaving individually, and networking with other agents.

Another subcomponent of public policy as a CAS entails consensus building and collaborative efforts (Innes & Booher, 1999). Desouza (2011) and Innes and Booher, (1999) suggested that policy makers consistently communicate with key players and individuals who are impacted by their decisions. Such actions of consensus building provide organized, refined, and shared approaches to dealing with complex societal problems (Innes & Booher, 1999). Desouza (2011), termed the CAS approach used for policy as “evidence driven policy” (p. 2). The utilization of the CAS approach for policy research (Inness & Booher, 1999) in Nicodemus is considered key in analyzing and improving legislative outcomes there.

Furthering the support of the CAS framework for public policy, is the usage of CAS for evaluating policy outcomes (Desouza, 2011; Innes & Booher, 1999). When new policy is introduced into society, people adapt to the legislative changes (Desouza, 2011). As more people interact with one another, shared modifications are made amongst the network of constituents (Bushe & Marshak, 2015). Over time, dynamic systems are created, as a result. Individuals can be motivated to perform singularly and intelligently, as required by CAS (Innes & Booher, 1999). This author’s (1999) research endorses my using the CAS approach for this study. The individual and group Nicodemus web agents must be motivated, engaged, and informed. Preservation policy compression must be communicated amongst all Nicodemus web agents and trustworthy to the entire web to improve preservation outcomes at the Nicodemus NHS.

An example of public policy as a CAS can be seen with the NHS designation in Nicodemus (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014). New changes are being recommended to grow the existing NHL designation to nearby landscapes (Reed & Wallace, 2013). As a living community of family and traditional relationships, Nicodemus is also a homeland for a “large web of descendants scattered across the country” (Reed & Wallace, 2013, p. 5). Noting the collective rights of the land, the concern over land ownership is growing with the generations and is a major factor for further analysis, alongside the expansion of the Nicodemus NHL legislation. Perceiving the many complexities of the current and future NHL designation in Nicodemus, means acknowledging the many constituents impacted by, behaving autonomously, and intermingling with each other, in relation to the Nicodemus NHS (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014). Because of these reasons, it is pertinent that the significance of the Nicodemus web be explored for both evaluating and improving the Nicodemus NHS policy outcomes.

CAS as collaborative governments is another application of complex systems for policy (Abels, 2012; Innes & Booher, 1999, Wigfall, 2014). In current times, the economic downfall has led most local governments to lowered budgets with an increased need for services (Abels, 2012). This requires doing more with less, meaning reducing budgets and employees and collaborating with other local agencies and individuals, for example. The old-fashioned methods of organization and planning have capitalized their

impact (Abels, 2012). Therefore, the innovated idea of CAS as collaborative governments, is thought to produce the best possible outcomes in facing the complex local governments in modern times.

The application of CAS as collaborative governments is relevant for the exploration of the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus (Abels, 2012; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; see Appendix B and C; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014). This framework of CAS is suggested for the Nicodemus NHS, in consideration of the Nicodemus web (Abels, 2012; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). In alignment with the CAS approach, the Nicodemus web is considered a major factor in the implementation of policy designation outcomes (Abels, 2012; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). The organization and collaborations within the Nicodemus web are essential by nature.

The CAS approach has also been applied to tourism efforts (Baggio et al., 2010). In defining travel destination locations as collections of intermingling individuals and institutions implanted within a shared web, I found such systems to be multifaceted and lively. Utilizing CAS for tourism destination webs entails the assurance of stakeholder authority and collaboration. The idea of CAS for tourism destinations further solidifies the relevance of utilizing the Nicodemus web for evaluating and improving the policy outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS (Baggio et al., 2010; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). The Nicodemus NHS is a tourist location, and with the proposed

expanded legislation, the CAS approach for tourism efforts is greatly needed to better implement the change in policy.

For all three of these themes, computational modeling serves as an effective approach to aid in communicative efforts, strengthening relationships, and providing evidence for policy research (Desouza, 2011). Computational modeling allows an extended view of the abundant interrelated dynamics needed to wholly understand social systems, such as the Nicodemus web (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Miller & Page., 2007; Wigfall, 2014). Developing a computational model in the form of an interactive social network, for the complex Nicodemus web would support interactions amongst stakeholders, build alliances between them, and serve as groundbreaking evidence for the utilization of CAS concepts for public policy (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Desouza, 2011; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014).

The Nicodemus Web Holds the Key

As previously discussed, the CAS approach is considered most appropriate for exploring the cultural and historical impact of the preservation policy in Nicodemus (Desouza, 2011; Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Miller & Page, 2007; see Appendix B and C; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c; Wigfall, 2014). In utilizing this theoretical framework to acknowledge and characterize the Nicodemus web, this study provides great contributions to the literature gaps pertaining to public policy as a CAS, the Nicodemus web, African American NHL locations, and preservation evaluation (Desouza, 2011; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). Constituent network

development and sustainability for legislation implementation are further analyzed. This analysis provides valuable information on the complexities of public policy. It also contributes to the much needed shift from the traditional view of the Nicodemus NHS to the complex Nicodemus web (Capra, 1996; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Wigfall, 2014).

With a shift in perception of the parameters of the Nicodemus NHS, the Nicodemus web could be employed to produce policy outcome improvements for Nicodemus (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Capra, 1996; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Wigfall, 2014). By identifying and collaborating with Nicodemus web cohorts, information aiding legislative improvements could be nourished into web (Johnson, 2009). To organize the Nicodemus web, computational modeling, such as Hoffman Brandt and Zientek's (2012) Nicodemus web model, provides further validation of the application of the CAS approach for this study. Such a model provides policy makers, and other agents of the Nicodemus web, with in depth illustrations of the complexities of the Nicodemus NHS. Finally, in light of the newly proposed policy changes of expanding Nicodemus designation, the desire to improve tourism outcomes, and better preserve the Nicodemus NHS, the CAS approach provides a comprehensive structure for such initiatives (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014).

The Nicodemus Web: Complex and Expanding

The concept of Nicodemus web was introduced in recent research and is need of further investigation (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014). The idea of the Nicodemus web has been previously named to define a virtual illustration of the complexities of the Nicodemus NHS (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009). In this way, the Nicodemus web model denoted a computational and figurative model used for exploring and further characterizing the Nicodemus network.

For this study, however, the concept of the Nicodemus web is proposed as the literal system of historic Nicodemus landscape, residents, descendants, locals, and community and institutional partners interconnected to a shared system of African American history (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014). The landscape of Nicodemus is a part of this web because it serves as a living location that will worsen without conservation labors enforced by legislation and the Nicodemus web agents. Also, the few remaining Nicodemus residents, serve as the core connections to the town. They maintain relationships with other members of the web, such as Nicodemus descendants living elsewhere, historical preservation societies, government officials, religious organizations, educational institutions, and other historical African American townships. All of these entities are interconnected through the web. This working definition of the Nicodemus web is grounded in research predominately

implied by Edwards (2015), Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2012), Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan (2009), Reed & Wallace (2013), and Wigfall (2014).

In recent research, Edwards (2015) discussed the unfortunate realities of small rural towns in America. Rural towns are loosely defined by population and location, as there really is no standard formula for defining such places. “In order to define what a rural community means there must be an identity based on the perception of the landscape, culture, and history found by the people’s relationships, language, and physical boundaries” (Edwards, 2015, p. 37). The landscape is considered a part of the history and culture. Also, the landscape is connected to a web of collective consciousness that defines humans and their experiences. Edwards (2015) offers these principles that analyze and display the complexity of the Nicodemus identity through various expressions of art.

Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2012) concluded Nicodemus would be best managed as a multifaceted expansive place and a physical landscape. In its most basic form, complex adaptive systems are composed of interactions amongst agents, usually resulting from a shared physical location, membership to a group, or interest in information. Because the interrelated connections of the Nicodemus NHS form a network or web of agents, the Nicodemus web should be seen as a complex adaptive system (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Mitchell, 2009; Wigfall, 2014).

Such policy implementation would necessitate a change of attention to preserve the Nicodemus NHS as the complex Nicodemus web.

Lastly, the Nicodemus NHS is thought to be a complex entity that is preserved and maintained by countless relations expanding far beyond its physical location (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014).

Acknowledging the strength of the Nicodemus web, Reed and Wallace (2013) identified Nicodemus as home to the largest “web of descendants scattered across country” (p. 5). All of the descendants of the Nicodemus web have stake in the preservation of the Nicodemus NHS and could benefit from better understanding their role and impact on the preservation outcomes.

The phenomenon of the Nicodemus web as presented by the Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan (2009), listed the significance of interactions amongst government officials, likewise organizations, local citizens, and descendants in implementing the plan’s preservation goals. The purpose of the plan is to guide the NPS and community partners working together to meet these goals. This study emphasized the value of collective energies constructing widespread and all-encompassing comprehension of the Nicodemus NHS. In highlighting the interpretive plan itself, the authors accentuate the weight of the Nicodemus partnership connections in implementing legislative goals and objectives. Because this relationship network is composed of many ingredients, it is considered to be complex and adaptive (Johnson, 2009; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). This complexity serves as

the forefront for the Nicodemus web concept, as these noted relationships are pertinent in achieving preservation and policy goals.

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan (2009) lists several goals pertaining to the Nicodemus web phenomena. Foremost, this plan seeks to further define roles and increase interaction amongst constituents within the Nicodemus web. A central source or method of communication amongst all members of the Nicodemus web is absent. Although various cohorts within the Nicodemus web may have their own contact lists, no main point of access exists for such information to be shared throughout the web. These points of improved communication within the Nicodemus web are major needs to be addressed for the Nicodemus NHS, mainly due to the prospects of collaborative partnerships improving policy goals and objectives (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Wigfall, 2014).

Because the constituent roles of the Nicodemus web are presently uncharacterized, the interactions and performance of the web have deteriorated, thus, impacting the dynamics of the preservation policy outcomes in the town (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Miller and Page, 2007). Therefore, Nicodemus is identified as an aged township, with a saddened economy, and in great need of cultivating the Nicodemus web collaborative interactions (Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Wigfall, 2014).

Other Webs of Historical Significance

The concept of the Nicodemus web, and its complexity, can be seen amongst other African American historical locations (Blakey, 2010; Brunswig, 2013; Inwood, 2013; Ng, 2011). In Manhattan, New York, the surrounding descendant community population displayed interest and collaborated with researchers in the discovery and monument designation of a local African burial ground (Blakey, 2010). This collaboration is seen as a keen example for other African American historical locations.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) NHS in Atlanta, Georgia is another African American NHS location with a web of private and state agents (Inwood, 2013). This NHS serves to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Located primarily on Auburn Avenue, this NHS is composed of a physical landscape, King family members, Atlanta citizens, government agencies, visitors, and historical organizations. Just as true for the Nicodemus web, Inwood (2013) found the need to acknowledge the varying interpretations of the legacy of Dr. King. This need for multiple interpretations is in light of a lack of cohesiveness amongst the many key constituents who take part in the MLK NHS.

The Dearfield Research Network of the Dearfield, Colorado National Register of Historic Places, contributes a web of key scholar agents, working to enhance integral scholarship alongside the preservation of the Dearfield historical location (Brunswig, 2013; Connell, 2013). Because this town is considered to be of national African

American historical significance, this network of researchers have emphasized the value of their collaborative efforts in properly preserving this historical location.

Finally, the New Philadelphia, Illinois NHL is most similar to the Nicodemus web (Ng, 2011; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). This NHL location was the first town organized and legally obtained by a freed African American (Ng, 2011). Just as with the Nicodemus NHS, the town's descendants have always remained invested and engaged in the historical preservation and legislation efforts. The web of the New Philadelphia landscape, local and national entities, descendants, and government agencies compose a network of collaboration that face similar issues as the Nicodemus web (Ng, 2011; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). Some of these issues include, conflicting interpretations of the NHL and preservation implementation tactics. In conclusion, as shown by these noted examples, the concept of the Nicodemus web is an emerging phenomenon amongst other similar complex locations of African American historical significance.

The Web Concept for NHPA Implementation

The idea and significance of the Nicodemus web, appears to be evident, just as with other similar complex networks connected to African American historical locations (Blakey, 2010; Brunswig, 2013; Inwood, 2013; Johnson, 2009; Ng, 2011). In specifically highlighting partnerships for the NPS system, Weddell et al. (2008) suggested the need for NPS partnership collaborations during a time of economic downfall. Partnerships are considered pertinent in overcoming common issues and building constituent

relationships. Ultimately, partnerships are thought to be key for improving and increasing available programs and services for NPS park locations (Weddell et al., 2008). The understanding of constituent attitudes and actions serves as forefront in this cause. According to Weddell et al. (2008), because constituent perception and behaviors hold the power to impact NPS units, engaging and inclusive partnerships are necessary for successful outcomes.

Expanding on the significance of partnerships, Laven et al. (2013) contributed the exploration and acknowledgement of the national heritage area (NHA) theoretical model as a paradigm approach to federally designated landscape management. NHA's are living landscapes of natural, ethnic, and/or historical significance (Laven et al., 2013; McKee, 2011). These places range in locality, communal dynamics, heritage assets, and dimensions. The NHA framework seeks to encompass preservation goals with financial, cultural, and constituent objectives (Laven et al., 2013; McKee, 2011). This collaborative approach has strengthened and aided the NHA locations in facing conservational trials in today's failing economy. Finally, the NHA collaborative framework produces both concrete and elemental results for the varying NHA locations (McKee, 2011).

Because the NHA model is fairly new, further research is needed to further evaluate and define the framework. Laven et al. (2013) proposed the NHA theoretical model as a 4 part setup of core ingredients, guiding strategies, implementation activities, and accomplishments. The core ingredients are the identified assets and reserves needed

to implement and maintain the NHA location (Laven et al., 2013). Guiding strategies are used to initiate collaborative programs and inclusive conservation efforts. In implementing such activities, the NHA's further progress their purpose. Finally, accomplishments are seen as visible and invisible proof of NHA location improvements (Laven et al., 2013).

McKee (2011) adds the idea of collaborative park systems, amongst historic landmarks, being connected to cultural landscapes and living communities. Even though such parks are associated with the NPS, the actual management of these parks function in many ways through local partnerships. McKee (2011) emphasizes the many possibilities of partnership roles, depending on specific NHA situations. In motivating collaborative efforts, program planning, embracing local heritage, and the availability of industrial opportunities are all acknowledged.

In emphasizing the importance of partnerships and applying the NHA framework as a complex adaptive system, for the purposes of this study, I will explore and analyze the Nicodemus web (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007). Because the Nicodemus web is similar to that of the NHA model, I will utilize evaluation suggestions for the NHA model (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Laven et al., 2013). NHA's are considered complex systems requiring intricate analysis of their many interconnected facets (Laven et al., 2013). Additionally, the Nicodemus web is considered a complex adaptive system in need of in-depth examination of its varied elements (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007).

The acknowledgment and further exploration of the NHA model, as compared to the Nicodemus web, has several associations for policy developers (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Laven et al., 2013; McKee, 2011). First, examining such collaborative models will provide innovative methods for inclusive and sustainable shared efforts amongst policy makers and their constituents (McKee, 2011). Second, in strengthening partnerships and preservation efforts, network management will be evident to policymakers. Third, focusing on the significance of networks for landscape preservation is comparable to measuring the glue that holds together the many parts of a whole. Finally, in perceiving these associations, policy developers will see the value in current and accessible resources that could be used to expand the legislative preservation influences on NHL units.

Current Research Findings

Research on the Nicodemus NHS is fairly limited. However, this study will build upon the current and most recent research suggestions for Nicodemus (Edwards, 2015; Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt and Zientek, 2012; NPS, 2009; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Weber & Sultana, 2013; Wigfall, 2014). In utilizing these suggestions, the recent request to increase and modify the current NHL designation is a major cause for further research (Reed & Wallace, 2013). The new proposed areas are Nicodemus, Nicodemus Township, Kebar, and Wild Horse Township, totaling four landscapes. This proposal is being sought in order to highlight the land. Reed & Wallace (2013) found issues with the many landowners who are growing with the generations of descendants.

This emerging problem instances minimal preservation of uninhabited houses and farms shared by inheritance of descendants who are not current residents.

In addition to landowner issues, Reed and Wallace (2013) notated the lack of research on African American towns, as it pertains to preserving the historical significance of such locations. Some of the towns recommended for further research were Allensworth, California, Boley, Oklahoma, and Independence Heights, Texas. Each of these historical locations were founded by African Americans and promoted land ownership for African American homesteaders. These research findings from the Reed and Wallace (2013) study further support my policy investigation of the Nicodemus NHS.

Another recent study on the Nicodemus NHS, proposed a shift in the park set up and policy implementation processes (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). These researchers recommended further emphasizing the land to visitors and develop partnership agreements with descendants who are land owners living elsewhere. Finally, Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2013) contributed the lack of trust in legislation as a “legacy of post-reconstruction social dynamics that led to Exoduster migration in the first place!” (p. 24). It is offered that this lack of trust is still present today in Nicodemus, rather it has taken a new form through the NHS designation. Due to varying landowners, the NPS has limited access to the current NHS buildings (Hoffman Brandt and Zientek, 2013). This creates tension and conflict between the NPS and descendants who want to keep their land in their family.

The Hoffman Brandt and Zientek (2012) findings provided valuable information for the purposes of this study. Their research provides relevant suggestions for not only the Nicodemus web investigation, but also in highlighting the lack of trust for government policy (Hoffman Brandt and Zientek, 2012). This key issue is very relevant for this study and its benefactors. The lack of trust validates the need for the exploration of the cultural and historical impact of the policy designation in Nicodemus. It is believed better understanding the Nicodemus web can assist in repairing partnership issues existing amongst core constituents of the web.

Conducting a needs assessment for the Nicodemus NHS, Wigfall (2014) developed suggested improvement themes. This research recommended expanding the current NHS exhibit. Also, a database system was mentioned for the visitor center. It was offered that more housing should be developed in the town's historical resident areas (Wigfall, 2014). Emphasis on partnerships and utilizing more landscape for events were given as well. A redefining of the park system is also proposed; and in particular a cultural park, where heritage and community connections are acknowledged as useful for preservation efforts. Finally, this author's (2014) research provided a new model for the NHL designation process, in which community members are more involved in the process.

The Wigfall (2014) study listed compelling issues facing the Nicodemus NHS. Although the author's (2014) research does not emphasize the web concept per say, the importance of partnerships was mentioned. While it is agreed the Nicodemus NHS could

serve to better use the landscape and incorporate a new database system, these things cannot be done solely by the NPS (Wigfall, 2014). The implementation of such activities and programs will require the organizing and strengthening of the Nicodemus web.

Another recent Nicodemus study conducted by Edwards (2015), sought to explore various ways of expressing the Nicodemus identity through artwork. Drawing heavily upon the cultural landscape, Edwards (2015) emphasized the layered identity of Nicodemus. This researcher (2015) also stressed the importance of comprehending relationships between landscapes and human experiences for understanding community identity.

Shifting the focus to visitor outcomes, Weber & Sultana (2013) highlighted the correlation between park tourists and the varying localities of minority people. Nicodemus was shown to have its highest visitor population of 37% being African American (Weber & Sultana, 2013, p. 451). These scholars added Nicodemus is amongst other African American historical locations that are underrepresented in American history. Further research on such places would provide increased comprehension for better tourism and preservation efforts (Weber & Sultana, 2013). This article (2013) is very pertinent in emphasizing the need for preservation policy research in Nicodemus. In considering the vast web of descendants who are spread across the country, yet still deeply rooted to the Nicodemus township, the organizing of the web could improve visitor interests and tourism outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS (Reed & Wallace, 2013; Weber & Sultana).

In furthering the claim of needing increased research for African American historical locations, Ferentinos and Lowe (2008) sought to categorize arrays of places that are affiliated with African American history and evaluate their current historical interpretations. The scholars (2008) found current NHL locations of African American historical significance to be fairly represented within the NPS system. Also, of 10 themes used for evaluations purposes, five were insignificantly covered or in need of better interpretation. These five themes included colonial and early America, science and technology, archeology, history of the American west, economics and commerce (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008).

As a result of these findings, and in increasing scholarly and legislative efforts, these above noted researchers recommended focusing on the five underdeveloped themes (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). Ten additional themes were advised, for being visibly limited within the NHL system. These themes include education and literacy, institutional history, intellectual history, Jim Crow era, racial violence and intimidation, Black recreation, leisure, and entertainment, Black freedom struggle, family life and relationships, grassroots and vernacular history, and migration and movement (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). It was also encouraged that preservation organizations and other NPS partners work together with the NPS to increase research and preservation efforts for African American historical locations (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008).

Although Congress has expressed an interest in such research, I am not aware of any known funding being provided to actually implement it (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008).

Also, a large majority of African American NHL locations appear to be suffering from limited preservation resources (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). In addressing this issue, these scholars (2008) contribute the necessity of partnerships between the NPS and constituent populations of African American NHL locations. These partnerships are believed to provide access and resources, where funding support from Congress falls short.

In 2008, 174 NHL units were considered historically significant to African American history (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008, p. 4). These researchers proposed interpretation revisions for 47 of the current African American NHL locations (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008, p. 10). It is recommended these NHL's be redefined to include interpretations of their contributions to national African American history. The Nicodemus NHS was listed amongst the locations recommended for reinterpretation.

Adding to these above stated interpretive issues, there were no NHL units found to highlight the areas of art, maritime, or conservation for African American history (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). Separate from the NHL program, the National register of historic places serves as the "official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation" (NPS, 2011, para. 1). Also working under the authority of the NHPA, this database was developed to organize and promote preservation efforts for significant American historical locations. In researching this list, Ferentinos and Lowe (2008) found 89 African American National Register Properties (NRP) and 112 African American historical locations not currently acknowledged by the NRP are all in need of further

research (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008, p. 10). The act of coordinating constituent networks is promoted as key in the implementation of improved preservation outcomes.

The work of Ferentinos and Lowe (2008) is groundbreaking in that it provided a general scope on the current state of African American NHL units and other undocumented African American historical locations in America. The researcher's (2008) promote the notion of urgency to generate innovative tactics in preserving historical African American locations, such as Nicodemus. With thematic issues of underrepresentation, a lack of funding, and the need for increased research efforts, the organizing of network constituents is a recognizable solution in addressing these issues being faced by African American NHL units (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008).

In highlighting these same issues with the Nicodemus NHS, in 2009, the NPS developed the comprehensive interpretive plan (NPS, 2009). This plan is goal driven and serves to assist with decision making by providing written suggestions for park workers. The long-range interpretive plan provides an overview of the vision and goals for the Nicodemus NHS through the next 10 years. It's annual implementation plans are collections of actions to be utilized for implementing long term goals. Finally, an interpretive database of continuous research information is to be kept by the Nicodemus NHS workers.

In developing the interpretive goals, the NPS included park workers, local residents, descendants, and organizational partners in the planning (NPS, 2009). During this collaborative process, the legislative purposes of the NHS designation was a major

factor of consideration. For the sake of future generations, this township was designated by the federal government to be preserved and protected through beneficial interpretation (NPS, 2009). These interpretations were to preserve the structures and areas contributing to the development of Nicodemus. The significance of the Nicodemus NHS and its role in the Reconstruction Era and the westward expansion was also to be promoted (NPS, 2009).

Improved visitor outcomes, marketing efforts, constituent communications, and tour dynamics were all recorded in the interpretive plan as desired changes and goals (NPS, 2009). The need to establish a Nicodemus web group was also listed as a goal to better organize and connect all of the partners of the Nicodemus NHS. The significance of current and potential partners was highlighted as being pertinent in implementing the goals of the comprehensive interpretive plan (NPS, 2009). It is unknown at this time if any of these documented goals from this plan have been implemented at the Nicodemus NHS. Nevertheless, this plan notates the original purpose of the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS designation and its web of partners who hold the key of improved preservation for the town.

An Expanding Problem

This study explored the impact of the policy designation in Nicodemus, as it pertains to the town's cultural and historical contributions to American history (NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c). Hyojung (2013) offered the connections amongst policy makers and stakeholders of varying cohorts are key in better understanding policy dynamics.

Receiving NHL designations or being listed in the National Register of Historic Places does not automatically deem ownership or regulatory authority to government officials. The NHPA requires shared preservation responsibility amongst federal and non-federal and private constituents. This same clause was listed in the Nicodemus NHS bill, designating the NHS for future collaborative works with individuals, local government, community agencies, educational institutions, and organizations (HR., 1996).

In wake of Hyojung's (2013) suggestions, the Nicodemus web is in need of further exploration in order to better understand the policy dynamics of the Nicodemus NHS (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). The Nicodemus NHS is facing issues of increasing descendant land ownership and interpretive underrepresentation in its preservation efforts (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Hyojung, 2013; Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). Finally, both the NHPA and more specifically, the Nicodemus NHS legislation stress the requirements of partnerships in successfully preserving the township.

In addition to the noted issues of the Nicodemus NHS and other African American historical locations, national economic problems have impacted all NPS units in recent times (Brass, 2013). In 2012, the NPS worked to preserve 401 park units (Department of the Interior, 2012, para. 2). In 2013, the government shutdown closed 368 units (Brass, 2013, p. 14). Government shutdowns happen when the president and congress cannot come to a settlement on the fiscal budget for the country (Brass, 2013). When a government shutdown happens, as it did in 2013, national parks are immediately

closed until an agreement is met. During this time, tourism and local economies are left to suffer a loss.

The Nicodemus NHS was already impacted by sequestration, or federal budget cuts (Wetz, 2013). As a result, the Nicodemus NHS has planned for a reduction of program services available to park visitors. As a result, the ending of all off-site park worker services has been implemented. In already facing growing fiscal problems, alongside the government shutdown, and with future possibilities of more of these issues to come, the Nicodemus NHS is in dire need of further preservation support. Finally, it is through models such as partnership networks and NHA locations that the Nicodemus web is seen as being a tool for improving preservation efforts in Nicodemus (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Weber & Sultana, 2012). By focusing on the varying actors of the Nicodemus web, their roles can be further defined and comprehended, better unifying the Nicodemus NHS in its totality.

The Benefits of Exploration and Preservation

Encouraging African Americans to record and document their experiences during the Civil War, (African American abolitionist) Fredrick Douglas once emphasized the act of memory being given to human beings for a reason (Holyfield & Beacham, 2011; Price, 2014). Memorials and monuments are considered abridged representations of historical happenings. Interpretation of such past events and stories, are dependent upon shared memories (Price, 2014). These memories are rearranged and ideological with hidden

diminished experiences associated with historical events. As generations grow, the idea of letting the past be the past is developing as an ideology in current times.

These statements and findings on the importance of remembering one's history, in order to truly learn for one's future are extremely relevant for the Nicodemus NHS (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). Without further comprehension of the complexity of the Nicodemus web, the hidden and underrepresented stories and landscapes of the town will be left untold and under preserved. For these reasons the NHPA and NHS designation was evaluated and interpreted through the exploration and categorizing of the Nicodemus web (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009).

These truths are also evident for other African American historical locations, such as the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. NHS (MLK) in Atlanta, Georgia (Inwood, 2009). This site includes a landscape mainly in or around Auburn Avenue, where Dr. King worked, pastored his church, held political meetings, his burial location, and the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change. In developing the NHS over the years, many constituents have been involved, such as the NPS, the King family, Atlanta residents, city officials, educational institutions, and historical organizations. In working collectively and individually to memorialize the legacy of Dr. King, the varying interpretations have often caused friction amongst this MLK preservation network.

Another African American historical location, Dearfield, Colorado, was founded in the early 1900's (Brunswick, Et.al, 2013; Connell, 2013). The rise and decline of this town has been compared to Nicodemus, Kansas, New Philadelphia, Florida, and Booker,

Texas, amongst other similar African American settlements of its time. Dearfield is listed with the NRHP and is currently under the preservation care of the Dearfield research network that emphasizes preservation efforts through scholarship and research.

In considering the importance of remembering lessons of the past, and utilizing the NHPA to preserve history in any of the above noted African American historical locations, the various acts of policy implementation must be thoroughly understood (Brunswig, Et.al, 2013; Holyfield & Beacham, 2011; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Inwood, 2009). Because diverse problems require varying policy solutions, it is important to comprehend the notion of flexibility in implementation efforts (Bryson, 2013; Johnson, 2009). Public participation is valued for an array of reasons, but mainly as contributions for developing and sustaining preservation interpretations and other efforts. This validation of public participation provides further evidence of the value in analyzing the impact of the policy designation in Nicodemus, through the exploration of the Nicodemus web.

A New Hope for Nicodemus

The NHPA is perceived as a solid piece of legislation for preservation in America (Tyler, 2009). Preservation in America requires various perceptions and interpretations for successful outcomes. These elements of preservation, along with the importance of public engagement and partnership processes, are all significant for the Nicodemus NHS (Quick & Feldman, 20011; Tyler, 2009). Recent research has labeled Nicodemus as being underrepresented in the NHL system (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt

& Zientek, 2012). Although the town has unquestionably demonstrated its contributions to American history, the legacy of Nicodemus is not being adequately preserved by the NHPA and NHS designation. This is also an issue for many other African American historical locations (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008).

The role of the Nicodemus web was sought in comparison with the earlier stated NHA model (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Laven et al., 2010). This model involves partnerships and collaborative efforts amongst key agents associated with the heritage areas and the NPS (Laven et. al., 2010). This network approach enhances relationships and builds trust for policy initiatives. As a result, physical landscapes and cultural heritages are conserved effectively. This NHA model is a complex adaptive system, composed of many agents working together for conservation goals (Johnson, 2009; Laven et al., 2010).

In considering the NHA model in comparison to the Nicodemus web, the potentials for the Nicodemus web are limitless (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Laven et al., 2010). The Nicodemus NHS is in need of a better understanding of the Nicodemus web, including its complex dynamics and potential in better implementing the NHPA collaborative goals and NHS designation. It is believed the web can be utilized to strengthen the outcomes of the preservation policy in Nicodemus. At this time, when new proposals are being sought for legislation expansion, the residents are limited in numbers, and the economy is suffering, this study is meaningful and useful to all

members of the Nicodemus web (Brass, 2013; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek; Reed & Wallace, 2013).

Conclusion

As it has been presented in this literature review, there are many major themes relevant to this study. Nicodemus is a complex network of interconnected land, people, and institutions (Edwards, 2014; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014). The explanation of the CAS approach in analyzing and using the Nicodemus web for policy issues is evident in its application (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Meek, 2007). Current research indicates the underrepresentation of the Nicodemus NHS, potential expansion of its NHL designation, and growing landownership amongst descendants (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014). In further solidifying the pertinence and possibilities of the Nicodemus web, supportive research on partnership networks, collaborative governance, and National Heritage Area networks all provide policy implementation paradigms for the Nicodemus NHS (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Laven et al., 2010; Weddell et al., 2008).

The above noted themes reflect the underrepresentation of Nicodemus and other African American historical locations (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). Also, the need for partnerships and network building to improve policy outcomes, is a known theme amongst all recent research in Nicodemus.

Complementing this need for collaborative efforts is the concept of the Nicodemus web. The application of the CAS approach to explore policy networks, such as the Nicodemus web, is in need of further research (Capra, 1996; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Meek, 2007).

This study contributes to the literature knowledge base in many ways; however, the most relevant is the usage of the CAS approach to analyze the Nicodemus web and its relationship to the policy implementation outcomes in Nicodemus (Capra, 1996; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Meek, 2007; NPS, 2016c). The CAS approach is considered multidisciplinary and has fairly been used for policy research (Capra, 1996; Johnson, 2009; Meek, 2007). Finally and most importantly, this study will add to the current limited scholarly work on the Nicodemus NHS. Ultimately, this study will extend knowledge on policy implementation and preservation efforts for other African American and/or historically marginalized group NHL locations.

I employed an ethnographic approach to explore the impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus (Creswell, 2013; Gans, 2010; see Appendix B and C; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c; Tracy, 2010; Uprety, 2009). Using this approach provided in depth data on emerging themes supporting the Nicodemus web concept. Lastly, it highlighted the specific issues facing the Nicodemus NHS as it pertains to policy implementation outcomes.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus, Kansas. In this chapter, I will discuss my usage of a qualitative research method and ethnographic approach (Creswell, 2013; Gans, 2010). I will explain my role, personal connections, and previous experiences with the Nicodemus NHS. Participant criteria, sampling methods, and recruitment plans will also be discussed. I will then summarize my interview protocol procedures and instrumentation tools and practices. Next, I will present my data analysis plan and coding procedures. Also, I will address issues of trustworthiness for credibility, transferability, and dependability solutions. To finish, I will share ethical issues and interventions, such as access to data and required permissions.

Research Design and Rationale

For this qualitative study, I sought to explore the Nicodemus web to better understand the preservation policy results for the Nicodemus NHS. Qualitative research is defined as a method of interpretation that aids in bringing unseen aspects of the world into visibility (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014). By examining people and the various elements within their natural environments, researchers are better able to understand the phenomena being generated by their study subjects. I chose to use a qualitative method to better comprehend the role of the Nicodemus web for the Nicodemus NHS preservation results.

Creswell (2013) suggested using a qualitative approach when (a) a problem exists and is in need of further research; (b) the issue is complex and will require an in depth comprehension; (c) the study will benefit others; (d) to describe interconnections and dynamics utilizing foundational frameworks; (e) to create theories derived from incomplete frameworks; and (f) when numerical inquiry does not support the study goals. All of these noted criteria are in alignment with this study's goals. Because there is a preservation problem in Nicodemus and the Nicodemus web seems to contribute to the preservation outcomes (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014), this study is best suited as a qualitative study (Creswell, 2013).

When advocating for underrepresented populations, the ethnography approach was also suggested by Creswell (2013). Usually, ethnographic research addresses concerns of power, guidelines, freedom, discrimination, supremacy, and oppression (Creswell, 2013). I chose to use an ethnography approach because these themes are all related to the Nicodemus NHS. The Nicodemus legacy embodies a story of determination and hope despite the challenging setbacks faced by the early settlers (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Reed & Wallace, 2013; Wigfall, 2014).

In addition to social justice themes, ethnography is also advised for cultural exploration (Gans, 2010), such as with the Nicodemus web. Furthermore, the cultural impact of the Nicodemus NHS designation is complex and required in-depth analysis of the web (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Miller & Page, 2007). In using the ethnography approach for this study, I examined the current state of the Nicodemus web,

and more specifically the current happenings of the core agents of the web and their impact on the preservation realities at the Nicodemus NHS (Creswell, 2013; Gans, 2010).

In choosing an ethnographic approach, I carefully considered other qualitative methods, particularly grounded theory, as it is best used to gain improved comprehension of cultural phenomena (Creswell, 2013; Evans, 2013; Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Tavory & Timmermans, 2009). Grounded theory involves detailed examination of social issues and theoretic assertions. For the purposes of this study, I could have used the grounded theory approach to develop a new preservation evaluation model for the Nicodemus NHS and other African-American NHL locations. There is a need for further study on NHL location evaluations in general, as evaluation practices vary, yet no publically known knowledge base of best (evaluation) practices for the varying NHL location units (Nicodemus NHS: Long-Range Interpretive Plan, 2009). Missing data of evaluation practices of African American NHL locations contributes to the underrepresentation of these places.

My study provides a platform for future research on preservation of African American historical locations. Due to this being a limited dissertation study and because of this study's goals, I chose to use ethnographic method. For the purposes of developing a new preservation evaluation paradigm, however, Grounded theory is suggested for future evaluative research on Nicodemus. Other qualitative approaches I considered were narrative, phenomenology, and case study (Creswell, 2013). These methods were not chosen because they did not align with this study's goals (Creswell, 2013).

Role of the Researcher

Some study participants were distant family members, who are fellow descendants of Nicodemus. I had no supervisory or instructor authority over any of the participants. Also, because I am a descendant of Nicodemus and have prior knowledge of the preservation conditions there, I decided to take extreme caution to avoid any previous assumptions or biased interpretations on my part (Merriam, 2014).

Merriam (2014) advised making an effort to acknowledge one's role as an insider, such as my mentioned ancestral connections to Nicodemus. Having these connections, I was able to obtain initial access to the Nicodemus NHS and core web members. I also considered my outsider status (Merriam, 2014), meaning I do not physically live in Nicodemus and am not a core agent of the Nicodemus web. My combined insider and outsider status seemed to motivate participants to share information with me. All of the study participants were very willing to talk to me once they learned of my role as a researcher and as a distant member of the Nicodemus web.

My personal passion about the Nicodemus NHS legacy was another potential ethical issue. I have been interested in the Nicodemus story ever since I was a child and it is a part of my family history. To further avoid bias and address this ethical concern, I conducted an objective multidimensional examination of the Nicodemus NHS using the CAS approach (Chavez, 2008; Dwyer, 2009; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012).

Although I am an active member of the Nicodemus web, I do not possess a complete understanding of the Nicodemus web dynamics. This lack of knowledge further justified my using the CAS approach to unbiasedly characterize the Nicodemus web for preservation policy improvements (Capra, 1996; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Meek, 2007).

Methodology

The Nicodemus web participant subgroups were Nicodemus descendant residents, non-descendant residents, educational institutions, community organizations, and the NPS. I chose these particular participant arrangements based on the Hoffman Brandt and Zientek's (2012) Nicodemus web model. The authors' (2012) research highlighted the complex connections among relevant organizations, government officials, and individuals involved with the Nicodemus NHS.

In adhering to the sub-cohort categories and qualitative methods, snowball and convenience sampling was used (Creswell, 2013; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Merriam, 2014). Snowball sampling was chosen because it provided the opportunity to interview individuals connected to the Nicodemus web. Because many members of the Nicodemus web are fragmentally connected, snowball sampling was highly appropriate for this small scale study. Building trust is also a reason why snowball sampling was chosen, because word of mouth networking is more personable. Finally, convenience sampling was chosen based on my residing in California and the actual Nicodemus NHS being located in Kansas. This sampling method is more effective and economically

feasible, while still providing credible data. In utilizing this strategy, participants were interviewed via phone rather than in person.

The convenience strategy fashioned credibility by combining it with the snowball strategy (Creswell, 2013; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Merriam, 2014). These two sampling strategies are considered highly appropriate for this qualitative ethnographic study. Because the Nicodemus web is a culture-sharing network, it was best to gain access through the Nicodemus NHS staff and Nicodemus Historical Society representatives. Working with these two organizations to confirm participant association with the Nicodemus web contributed to the credibility of this study's findings.

Upon securing the Nicodemus NHS and the Nicodemus Historical Society letters of cooperation, (see Appendix F and Appendix G), I was given a list of potential Nicodemus web interview participants for this study. In using the snowball sampling strategy, if the individuals chose not to participate, I asked them to refer other interview candidates. I also did the same for those who did choose to participate.

There was no limit on participant suggestions. I also followed up with the NHS staff and Nicodemus Historical Society representative to confirm participant membership of the Nicodemus web prior to contacting the potential interview participants. Such confirmation entailed identifying with one of the subgroup categories and having a known associated history with the Nicodemus NHS.

Non-family members were primarily chosen as participants to avoid bias. Only extended relatives were interviewed, and only if necessary. In interviewing extended

relatives, limited or no previous personal relationship existed, which eliminated room for inappropriate or unethical data collection experiences.

Participants for this study ranged in age from 18+ to 100 years and were members of the Nicodemus web (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). This age range was chosen so that only legal adults were allowed to participate. In seeking resident participants for this study, the “Nicodemus area” was defined as surrounding towns or cities within a 20-mile radius. Because Nicodemus is an aging town with a dwindling population, it was necessary to seek participants from the surrounding Nicodemus area (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Participants from each sub-cohort within the Nicodemus web were selected based their status as a Nicodemus descendant living in the Nicodemus area, non-descendant Nicodemus area resident, formal agent or researcher of a partnering educational institution, authorized individual of an associating community organization, or worker of the NPS. The number of participants originally sought for this study was twenty, however, eleven total participants were interviewed. Three of these individuals fell into two different sub-groups. The participant totals for the Nicodemus web subgroups were three Nicodemus area resident descendants, one non-descendant Nicodemus area resident, two educational institution representatives, three community organization representatives, and five individuals from NPS.

The breakdown of the sub-categories provides a snapshot of the varying perspectives of the Nicodemus web members, according to Hoffman Brandt & Zientek

(2012) Nicodemus web model. Also, increased emphasis on the descendants and NPS workers was sought to better understand their roles for policy designation outcomes in Nicodemus. The descendant and NPS relationship seems to be at the heart of the current conditions of the Nicodemus NHS, as such was depicted in the noted Nicodemus web model (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). The educational institutions and community organizations were of lesser focus due to the apparently limited number of partners associated with the Nicodemus NHS.

Initial contact with participants included a phone call to introduce myself and briefly explain the study parameters. I verified participant Nicodemus web affiliations and scheduled the actual interview sessions. Participants were asked to block at least two hours for the interview appointment. This provided plenty of time to answer all questions during one interview session.

After the initial contact, I sent the study explanation summary, question outline, interview appointment confirmation, and a consent form via email and/or ground mail. Participants were given one week to review the documents and confirm their consent in order to schedule interview sessions with me. Following this phase, I contacted participants by phone at the appointed time, for the actual interviews. There were no technical issues and I used two audio recorders to record interview data.

Although the original goal of interviewing 20 Nicodemus web agents was not achieved, saturation was reached. The interview participants were well-informed of the Nicodemus township and NHS past and existing preservation circumstances. This

knowledge and first-hand experience provided rich and thick data results (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Maxwell, 2015). The interview participants provided enough information to draw the necessary conclusions in answering this study's research questions. The data was coded and analyzed throughout the duration of the data collection phase of this study in order to monitor emerging themes amongst the various Nicodemus web participants. Saturation was reached when no further themes emerged from the interview data, and amongst all participant subgroups.

Instrumentation

Adhering to suggestions by Angrosino (2007), Creswell (2013), Jacob and Furgerson (2012), and Sangasubana (2011), I used an interview protocol (see Appendix E), field notes protocol (see Appendix H), two voice recorders, an excerpt of the first three pages of the NHPA (see Appendix B), and the Nicodemus NHS Bill of 1996 (see Appendix C) in collecting this study's data. To begin this study, I reviewed the stated policy requirements of the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS legislation. My review contributed detailed comprehension of the NHPA and NHS policies pertaining to Nicodemus.

I developed the consent form and protocol documents for this study according to suggestions by Angrosino (2007), Creswell (2013), Jacob & Furgerson (2012), van Deventer (2009), and the Walden IRB. The interview protocol document included a script for the entire interview process, participant consent statement, open-ended questions, notes section, and audio recording information for the interview session.

The two audio recorders served as primary tools and the field notes protocol as a secondary instrument for my data collection. The field notes protocol provided backup for additional personal notes on the overall interview experience. The very essence of qualitative research involves capturing a piece of the human life story. Document analysis, audio recording, and interview protocols are considered standard for collecting such data (Angrosino, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Merriam, 2014; Sangasubana, 2011).

For Data Collection Instruments

The development of the interview protocol, (see Appendix E), is considered valid on the basis of the needs of this study (Angrosino, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Sangasubana, 2011). Because the Nicodemus NHS and other African American historical locations are limited in scholarly research and are underrepresented within the NHL system, there is no known evaluation platform for such locations (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). To address this issue, I collaborated recommendations by Angrosino (2007), Creswell (2013), and Jacob & Furgerson (2012) to develop the interview protocol for this study. Finally, the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) standard suggestions for the participant consent form is included within the interview protocol.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

For each data collection instrument and research question, the following details are relevant to this study. To measure the current conditions of the Nicodemus NHS

policy outcomes, I reviewed the first few pages of the NHPA and entire Nicodemus NHS policy. The frequency and duration of this analysis took place prior to and throughout the entire data collection process.

In seeking comprehension of the cultural and historical impact of Nicodemus NHS policy, benefits and hindrances of the Nicodemus NHS, Nicodemus web policy contributions, and policy improvement recommendations for Nicodemus, core Nicodemus web agents served as a main source for data collection (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). Using the interview protocol, I only interviewed each study participant once. The duration of the interviews lasted between one to two hours long. To address secondary plans of recruitment, the interviews were accommodating to participant scheduling needs.

Participants exited this study as follows. First, I mailed thank you cards to study participants. Once the findings are analyzed and officially approved by Walden University, I will provide study participants and the Nicodemus NHS with a completed electronic copy of this dissertation study. No follow-up procedures are necessary for this data collection plan.

Data Analysis Plan

For the ethnographic portion of this study, all coding processes were prompted by my using the CAS framework (Capra, 1996; Creswell, 2013; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009, Sangasubana, 2011). The ethnographic approach was chosen for its focus on cultural assessment (Gans, 2010). This study explored the varying

components of the Nicodemus web alongside the current Nicodemus NHS policy results (NPS, 2016c).

For the ethnographic application, Nicodemus web core constituents were interviewed to further comprehend the impact of the NHS designation and the role of the Nicodemus web for policy and preservation results (Angrosino, 2007; Capra, 1996; Creswell, 2013; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Sangasubana, 2011). I transcribed the audio data collected from the interviews. First, I used the transcriptions to code the data by identifying pertinent elements, relationships, and existing resources within the web. This provided further comprehension of the Nicodemus web. The CAS approach was utilized as a guide in categorizing and describing these noted elements of the Nicodemus web.

Second, I organized the data into themes describing the impact of the NHS designation in Nicodemus. This was done in accordance with specific research questions being sought, as well as any overall emerging themes. In accordance with the ethnographic approach (Creswell, 2013), I specifically sought thematic patterns, shared thoughts, and frequencies. Issues with data collection and/or inadequate cases were thoroughly analyzed. Field issues and my personal and general interpretations of the overall findings were also reviewed. These methods were chosen in order to provide an in depth ethnographic analysis of the interview data (Creswell, 2013).

Issues of Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility, the following strategies were utilized in presenting evidence of quality findings (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014; Tracy, 2010; Williams & Morrow, 2009). Most importantly, I used varying data collection sources for the purpose of achieving triangulation. These resources included the varying Nicodemus web participants, the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS policies, and also other literary sources (Creswell, 2013; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c; Tracy, 2010; Williams & Morrow, 2009). By exploring these various data sources, emerging themes pertaining to the policy impact for Nicodemus became visible. Additionally, by tapping into these sources, and answering the questions through their data output, credibility was greatly enhanced.

I also used prolonged engagement to improve credibility for this study (Creswell, 2013). To build relationships of trust with participants and understand the culture of the Nicodemus, I informed the NPS and Nicodemus Historical Society representatives of my study goals months before conducting interviews. Also I was honest and transparent about my personal ties to Nicodemus with study participants.

To address the issue of transferability, I used variation in participant selection and sought a thick description of research findings (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014; Tracy, 2010; Williams & Morrow, 2009). By working with the NPS and the Nicodemus Historical Society for participant referrals, the participant selection process provided

external validity. (Creswell, 2013; Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Tracy, 2010; Williams & Morrow, 2009).

Dependability for this study was achieved through the usage of triangulation (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014; Tracy, 2010; Williams & Morrow, 2009). Because I collected data from multiple sources, evidence of quality findings was generated. I serviced confirmability through reflective notations. These reflective notes established the value of the data, by the sharing of my own prejudices, beliefs, and previous involvements pertaining to the Nicodemus NHS (NPS, 2016c). I recorded reflective field notes prior to, during, and after official data collection and analysis. Once the data was collected and analyzed, I developed reflective comments to be included in the results discussion.

Ethical Procedures

Participant data was kept confidential. Institutional permissions pertinent to this study included, the completed dissertation proposal, an oral proposal defense, official institutional review board (IRB) approval, and the final oral defense and dissertation approval (Creswell, 2013; Silverman, 2010; Tracy, 2012). The completed dissertation includes chapter one, two, three, four, and five of this dissertation, as approved by my university researcher reviewer (URR) and committee members.

The following are ethical concerns relating to study participant recruitment tools and procedures. First, the exclusion of certain populations from the study, such as individuals younger than age 18 years was not an issue. The age criteria for the interview

participants was chosen to avoid complicated parental consent procedures for adolescents (Creswell, 2013; Silverman, 2010). The participant age limitations were based on current census data for Nicodemus, notating current resident ages ranging from the legal adult age of 18+ to 100 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). This information was explained to all participants.

My familial ties were also a concern for ethical recruitment processes (Chavez, 2008). To address this issue, only extended family members (not immediate) were enlisted as potential study participants. To address ethical concerns, such interview participants had limited or no prior relationship with me.

Other ethical concerns related to this study's data collection comprised of participant refusal situations, appropriate informed consent, and sensitive electronic data transaction (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014; van Deventer, 2009; Silverman, 2010; Tracy, 2012). To resolve refusal situations, I explained participant rights, study risks, my connection to Nicodemus, and study benefits (Creswell, 2013; Tracy, 2012). The participant consent form discuss why and how participants were chosen, the time obligation, charitable basis, participant right to decline and legal rights, study risks and benefits, and confidentiality notification (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014; van Deventer, 2009; Silverman, 2010; Tracy, 2012). Any information collected on potential participants who declined participation was destroyed.

Ethical concerns of sensitive electronic data transactions arose with the sharing of consent forms via email (Merriam, 2014; Tracy, 2012). I kept to the recruitment timeline

in issuing the usage of varying contact methods to certify consent forms and emails were securely obtained and stored. Additional precautions were taken, by prompting participants to be aware of their own consent emails and documents safekeeping.

All of the data for this study was confidential (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014; Silverman, 2010; Tracy, 2012). This mainly consists of the interview participant data. Anonymity of participant subjects were protected by providing confidential and general findings (Creswell, 2013). To address ethical concerns of the treatment of this information, I was the sole transcriber of this study's data. Further, this study's data is stored secured location (electronic, handwritten, and printed copies). I will destroy the data in 5 years of its official approval.

Summary

The usage of the qualitative research method and ethnographic approach are well justified in exploring the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus, Kansas (Creswell, 2013; Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Gans, 2010; see Appendix B and C; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c). Also, my role as a researcher, personal relations, and previous knowledge of Nicodemus was addressed as appropriate. Measures for participant criteria, sampling, recruitment, interview protocols, and instrumentation tools were carefully crafted to warrant ethical concern possibilities. The data analysis plan presented in this chapter outlines the coding procedures, highlighting the suitable use of the ethnographic approach. Significant ethical concerns and trustworthiness of credibility, transferability, and dependability were all thoroughly

covered. In conclusion, the data collection and analysis conducted for this study abided by the necessary institutional regulations.

Chapter 4: Results

This study was conducted in order to explore the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus, Kansas (see Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; see Appendix B and C; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c). My greater aim, however was to explore the Nicodemus web as a relevant factor for policy results (see Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012). In collecting and analyzing data for this qualitative study, I sought to understand the cultural and historical impact of the preservation policy in Nicodemus, benefits or harms of the policy, role and contributions of the Nicodemus web, and Nicodemus NHS policy improvement recommendations.

I used an ethnographic design in order to critically investigate the Nicodemus web's relevancy for preservation policy outcomes. I analyzed and formulated the interview data into a narrated summary of the current conditions and impact of the NHS destination in Nicodemus. In this chapter, I will discuss the data collection and analysis processes. Finally, I will share the study results by according to the research questions being asked.

Setting

I conducted the interviews via phone, in a quiet and private setting. The participants were informed of the questions before the interviews so they would have time to reflect on their answers. They were also informed of my recording the interview. Finally, the participants understood that I would keep their information confidential. There were no known issues with the setting that may have affected this study's results.

Demographics

Prior to conducting the interviews, I confirmed with the study participants that they were between ages 18 to 100 years and members of the Nicodemus web. I also verified this information confidentially, with the Nicodemus Historical Society and NPS contacts. Participants 1, 2, and 3 were Nicodemus descendants living in the Nicodemus area, while participant 4 was a non descendant living in the Nicodemus area. Participants 5 and 6 were agents of partnering educational institutions and participants 7, 8, and 9 were representatives of associating community organizations. Lastly, participants 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were NPS workers. All of these participants were selected based on their meeting the participant criteria for this study. Additionally, as a result of their participation, I collected thick and rich data results.

Data Collection

A total of 11 participants were interviewed including 3 Nicodemus descendants, 1 non-descendant, 2 educational partners, 3 community organization partners, and 5 NPS workers. It should be noted, however, that three individuals fell into two different Nicodemus web sub-cohorts. I gave these three participants two different numbers for each sub-cohort. In organizing and interpreting these particular participant responses, I carefully coded the responses into the most appropriate sub cohort category based on the specific subjects being discussed. Using this coding method allowed me to capture the various roles of the Nicodemus web study participants and their experiences within these roles.

According to my findings, there are only a few core Nicodemus web individuals, institutions, organizations, and NPS officials continuously working to preserve the Nicodemus legacy. I have protected the identities of the participants in order to aid in strengthening these Nicodemus web core agent relationships. In doing so, I gave the participants an opportunity to share their experiences openly and confidentially. Furthermore, I will not display any names or identifying information in this study's results. Instead, I will use the Nicodemus web sub-cohort titles and participant numbers when quoting or describing the interview data results.

While I did not meet the original goal of interviewing 20 Nicodemus web members, I believe that I achieved data saturation because the participants were highly knowledgeable of the Nicodemus township and NHS past and current conditions. They were Nicodemus descendants, area residents, educational, community, and NPS workers with their own individual Nicodemus story. The participants' familiarity and personal involvement with the Nicodemus NHS provided enough information to draw the necessary conclusions for this study's goals.

In achieving saturation, Fusch and Ness (2015) suggested the data will no longer produce any new data, themes, or codes. Moreover, how and when saturation levels are attained depends on the study design (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Research by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), found that as few as 6 interviews can achieve saturation based on the population sample size and study design. Using a grid to monitor emerging data themes is also suggested for attaining saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). As recommended

by Creswell (2013) and Fusch & Ness (2015), I developed thematic categories prior to conducting the interviews and coded the responses accordingly using a Microsoft excel spreadsheet. This provided a visual display of the emerging themes amongst the various Nicodemus web participants.

Throughout the duration of the interview process, I used the excel spreadsheet to monitor the emerging data according to the thematic categories, participant subgroups, and this study's research questions (see Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Maxwell, 2015). After the 8th interview, there were no new emerging themes or codes (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Although at this time I had reached the basic levels of saturation across all categories and subgroups, I conducted additional interviews to ensure saturation had been reached. See Appendix K for an overview of pertinent categories, primary codes, and participant responses.

All interviews took place by phone and were 30 -120 minutes in duration. I conducted the interviews between July and November of 2015. I interviewed each participant only once. The data collection instruments used were interview and field notes protocols, two voice recorders, and the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS Bill of 1996. I reviewed the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS Bill before the interviews to ensure my comprehension of the relative policy goals of the Nicodemus NHS. During the interviews, I used the interview protocol to record interview notes. In comparison to the interview transcripts, these notes gave me a better understanding of the answers being given. I also kept field notes which included descriptive and reflective notes, both describing the actual

interview experience and reflecting on my personal observations. Finally, every interview was audio recorded as a secondary instrument for data collection. I used two different voice recorders to ensure clarity and to have a backup audio file for each interview.

Data Analysis

In analyzing this study's data, I transcribed the audio data from the interviews. Next I used the transcripts to organize the data into thematic categories by highlighting participant statements related to the Nicodemus web and the NHS policy impact. Using this study's research questions and the CAS approach as a foundational guide, I searched for thematic patterns, shared thoughts, and frequencies. Next, using an excel spreadsheet, I further organized the highlighted thematic categories by identifying primary emerging coded units. I went through this process several times and was thoroughly consistent (Creswell, 2013).

The pertinent thematic categories were chosen based on this study's research questions and also the usage of the CAS approach (Creswell, 2015; Meek, De Ladurantey, & Newell, 2007). These thematic categories were policy designation cultural impact, policy designation historical impact, policy designation benefits, policy designation harms, Nicodemus web descriptive elements, Nicodemus web relationship status of and between agents and elements, the role of the Nicodemus web in policy outcomes, Nicodemus web current resources, Nicodemus web needed resources, policy improvement recommendations, and other emerging themes. The data I found within all

of these categories proved satisfactory in reaching saturation levels complimentary to this study's goals.

Primary codes that emerged from the data were five buildings, African American, community, cultural, descendants, dwindling population, economy, education, financial, hiring, history, homecoming, land, landscape, national, Native American, NHS, Nicodemus Historical Society, and Nicodemus NHS. Additional primary codes were Nicodemus township, Nicodemus web, NPS, partnerships, policy, technical, visitors, and younger generation. Finally, there were no discrepant cases, rather these data analysis methods allowed me to better perceive the preservation policy impact as it relates to the basic structure and functioning of the core Nicodemus web agents.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

As noted in chapter 3, to ensure credibility, several strategies were enacted to produce evidence of quality findings (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014; Tracy, 2010; Williams & Morrow, 2009). First, in achieving triangulation, I mainly used data from the varying perspectives and experiences of the Nicodemus web participants, each of which belonged to different sub-groups within the web (Creswell, 2013; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Tracy, 2010; Williams & Morrow, 2009). Although the participant sample size was smaller than the original goal, saturation was met and thoroughly assessed, as the data is thought to have provided acceptable results in answering this study's questions (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Maxwell, 2015). In analyzing the varying participant responses, emerging themes for both the Nicodemus web and the

policy impact were made accordingly visible for interpretation. Moreover, conducting interviews and sending them the questions ahead of time greatly increased credibility and contributed to the in-depth information that was provided by the participants. I also reviewed the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS policies, studied the history of the town, and remained up-to-date with current affairs in Nicodemus throughout the duration of this study. This allowed additional observation and comparison with the interview findings and emerging themes, further supporting triangulation.

I used prolonged engagement to enhance the credibility for this study (Creswell, 2013). I built relationships of trust with participants in order to better understand the culture and current status of the Nicodemus web and NHS. In introducing myself as a descendant of Nicodemus, participants were more likely to speak with me.

Transferability was achieved by choosing Nicodemus web interview participants according to the suggestion of the Nicodemus Historical Society and the NPS (Creswell, 2013; Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Merriam, 2014; Tracy, 2010; Williams & Morrow, 2009). These suggestions were compared and contrasted based on the potential study participant's role(s) and history with the Nicodemus web. To provide external validity, both the NPS and Nicodemus Historical Society representatives were asked to verify the study participant's Nicodemus web affiliations prior to my contacting them for an interview.

Dependability was achieved by using triangulation (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014; Tracy, 2010; Williams & Morrow, 2009). Because the interview data was

collected from multiple sources, indication of quality results were produced. Apart from dependability, confirm-ability was addressed by my consistent and thorough reflective notations. The reflective notes include my summary, prejudices, understandings, and previous thoughts relating to the Nicodemus NHS (NPS, 2016c). Reflective field notes were recorded prior to, during, and after official data collection and analysis. A more detailed explanation of my reflective comments will be included in the results discussion.

Results

How has the NHPA and NHS designation impacted the cultural and historical legacy of Nicodemus?

Addressing the *cultural impact*, I found the data reflected descendant hiring expectations and issues, Township Hall spacing concerns, an undesirable Visitor's Center location, and NPS office space disputes. Descendants face many challenges with the Nicodemus NHS, both previously and currently. There has been an ongoing struggle in hiring descendants to work for the Nicodemus NHS (NPS). When the park was first designated, Nicodemus community members expected more funds from NPS. Jobs with the NPS were at the forefront of these expectations. Over time, however, that has not regularly or abundantly happened. As a result of this, "enthusiasm for the partnership waxed and weened" (Educational institution participant 6, 2015).

Descendants have applied for NPS jobs at Nicodemus NHS and have not gotten them. NPS has endured descendant recruitment issues, such as working with the Nicodemus Historical Society to connect with potential descendants who may be able,

qualified, and interested in working at the Nicodemus NHS only later to find they are not qualified, able, or motivated. In seeking individuals for a 2015 summer internship position at the Nicodemus NHS, the NPS “tried to recruit several descendants probably about five and all of them turned it down” (NPS participant 10, 2015).

Contradictory to this descendant recruitment issue, NPS “can't specifically target Nicodemus descendants as an applicant pool” (NPS participant 14, 2015). These federal hiring policies are complicated, competitive, and impacting Nicodemus descendant applicant outcomes. NPS has hired few descendants and/or locals since the designation. Descendants “would have more of an interest of Nicodemus and trying to help preserve, protect, and do the history, then someone else that is being sent here to hold this job and they only here for two years” (Resident non-descendant participant 4, 2015). NPS adheres to “government hiring policies which are government wide it's not just NPS policies...they are created in order to give as much open competition for a job as possible. [Although] it helps eliminate bribery or nepotism to get a position so there are good reasons to have that open competition structure for our hiring policies but it makes it really hard for us to get people that are descendants of Nicodemus” (NPS participant 14, 2015).

There are also issues with the Township Hall. Mainly because the “community wants to use the space” (NPS participant 11, 2015) and have to complete a contract to do so. Traditionally, this space has been used by the community for dances, meetings, funeral dinners, homecoming, and events. Currently the Township hall is being used by

the NPS for their Visitor's Center and office space. If community members want to use the space, the NPS has to move their items aside. This current situation is seen as "a bit of a challenge" (NPS participant 11, 2015).

Stakeholders have conflicting views about the location and operation of the Visitor's Center and, "every group in Nicodemus has a different opinion about which way to go" (NPS participant 13, 2015). The Visitor's Center and NPS offices being located inside of the Township hall is not seen as up to par. The Township hall was not designed for such an arrangement, as it is basically an open hall space and a stage with curtains. The NPS offices are currently located on the stage and the Visitor's Center display is in the open hall space. These architectural limitations affect the NPS, locals, and descendants by hindering community access to the Township Hall, lacking permeant office space for the NPS, and contributing a poorly constructed Visitor's Center. Due to these undesirable conditions, the Nicodemus NHS is considered low functioning, thus negatively impacting the Nicodemus web and policy results.

Focusing on the *historical impact* of the NHS designation, NPS oral history policy concerns, the Nicodemus Historical Society preservation contributions, and restorative preservation work of the five Nicodemus NHS buildings themes were revealed in the data. Some oral histories are not accepted by NPS, mainly due to NPS oral history policies and their requirements of accurate historical accounts. The NPS workers are seen as "not culturally savvy" (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). Some NPS employees "come from that background which emphasizes written history

number one and you are working with a community that places more value on orally transmitted history, that's a roadblock and that's hard for us internally to get past" (NPS participant 14, 2015).

NPS struggles to accept the accuracy of oral histories, utilizing opposing policies based on European models of written documentation historical methods. In struggling to embrace oral history, some stories are going untold by the NPS. Nicodemus, like many vulnerable African American communities, carries oral histories through the generations, passing along valuable lessons learned and happenings of the ancestors through storytelling (Hoopes, 2014).

"My grandmother she passed away...she would tell me stories of things that happened...and I didn't even realize what I was doing but I had my little recorder and I was actually recording her" (Descendant participant 3, 2015). "When you have an entity that wants to get at the truth, get some consultants at the moment in time that the information is provided it is the best truth we've got. But over time that interpretation of that history could change. But we have a partner who's not...can't and it's not their fault it's just the way government works" (Educational institution participant 6, 2015).

The Nicodemus Historical Society has greatly contributed to preserving the Nicodemus legacy through its partnerships, archive cataloguing, and preservation work. This organization is considered a core Nicodemus web agent. It's programs and partnerships are extremely valuable for the Nicodemus NHS policy outcomes and for the Nicodemus legacy. The Nicodemus Historical Society is known for "sponsoring events

that specifically are set out to engage the larger community and other organizations,” educating them on the history of Nicodemus (Community organization participant 7, 2015). The Nicodemus Historical Society is also the main connection between the NPS and descendants.

Lastly, since the NHS designation, the NPS has supported restorative work for the AME Church, First Baptist Church, St. Francis Hotel, and Township hall. The AME Church was stabilized by the NPS almost immediately after the 1996 NHS designation. Parts of the church had fallen in so the NPS sent a qualified team to provide the much needed stabilization work. Also since the NHS designation, the First Baptist Church has been stabilized. Windows and vents have also been adjusted and installed “so the building could breathe” (Descendant participant 1, 2015). Additionally, a new roof with the original design layout has been added. Although the St. Francis Hotel is privately owned, the NPS has done some “minor work to the exterior of the building on the west side” (Descendent participant 1, 2015). Finally, the Township Hall has been stabilized, received fresh windows, and new building drainage.

Although progress on this work has been slow, it has contributed to the overall historical preservation of four out of the five Nicodemus NHS buildings. Also adding to these contributions, is the NPS ownership of the AME Church and the facade easements on the Township hall and St. Francis Hotel. The Schoolhouse and First Baptist Church are both privately owned and do not have facade easements with the NPS. Facade easements are a “private, legal interest conveyed by a property owner to a qualified

preservation organization or government agency” such as the Nicodemus landowners and the NPS (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2016). These agreements include the maintenance of buildings, grounds, and/or landscape for the sake of preservation support. Every facade easement is different, as they are negotiated contracts.

How has the NHS policy designation positively or undesirably affected the Nicodemus township?

This study’s data revealed the Nicodemus NHS policy has *harmed* Nicodemus more than it has benefited the township. Themes of a controversial NPS presence in Nicodemus, NPS employee transfer policies glitches, a failed Schoolhouse façade easement deal, and the mismanagement of town money displayed many thoughts of the NHS designation poorly contributing to the preservation of the Nicodemus legacy.

Some participants reported that the NPS workers are believed to lack a “level of excitement (Educational institution participant 5, 2015) and their presence “frustrate” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015) community members. The “perception of them being on the site controlling certain things sets up harm” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015).

Furthermore, NPS employee transfer policies are also seen as harmful to Nicodemus. As previously noted, after a certain period of time working at an NHL unit, employees can transfer or advance their career working at different park location. Nicodemus residents perceive this policy as harmful because “these folks here are just here temporary and so there is really no interest in (it)...the interest aspect of it is not

totally there because they're is just buying their time, this is what I see, their just buying time until they can get a better job making money elsewhere" (Resident non-descendant participant 4, 2015). Continuously changing employees negatively affects the Nicodemus NHS policy outcomes.

Historic preservation is another issue of concern to participants. For example, the Nicodemus School District #1 Schoolhouse facade easement proposal did not succeed. The negotiation between the NPS and the owners of the schoolhouse, the American Legion Post No. 270 of Bogue, Kansas began a few years ago with the goal of preserving and utilizing the building as a national historic site. At that time, \$200, 000 was available for the schoolhouse building stabilization, at expense of both parties signing the facade easement. Several meetings and agreement draft changes occurred but suddenly, "nobody was communicating with anybody" (Descendant participant 1, 2015). Shortly after this, the paperwork deadline was missed and all parties involved "lost the money" and the opportunity for this preservation effort (Descendant participant 1, 2015).

This study's data portrays conflicting perceptions on why the proposal failed. The American Legion is said to have "dropped the ball...would not call a meeting" (Descendant participant 1, 2015). Although representatives of the American Legion inquired about the structures report, wanting to know how it affected the facade easement and building stabilization, they never seemed to receive an "adequate answer and held up everything" (Descendant participant 1, 2015) as a result.

Aside from the report issue and lack of communication between the involved parties, learning to “let in without letting go” (NPS participant 13, 2015) was seen as a challenge for the American legion partners. NPS access to the schoolhouse building and residents being “wary about the white guy coming in” (NPS participant 13, 2015) is seen as an additional contributing factor to the failed negotiation. Regardless of why the negotiations collapsed, the reality of the lack of preservation work on the schoolhouse building still remains, which is seen as harmful to Nicodemus, for obvious reasons.

The mismanagement of money was another primary theme seen as harmful to Nicodemus. Mismanagement issues affected the “community's budget as it relates to the county budget that they give to the township” (Descendant participant 1, 2015). The “Township Board was having some issues with fraudulent activities” (NPS participant 10, 2015). This type of behavior makes people “leery of investing in Nicodemus web,” according to a participant who emphasized that it is important to “to ensure that part of the web is strong so that you can get more resources and more people to invest in it” (NPS participant 10, 2015).

This study yielded subjects of providing a national platform for preservation and more funding opportunities for policy designation as *benefits* for Nicodemus. The Nicodemus NHS designation has provided a platform for the African American experience by “making it known to the community and making it known nationally” (Descendant participant 3, 2015). This national venue has included radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and scholarly articles amongst other resourceful outlets.

Because of the NHS designation, “Nicodemus is now a part of a greater group of historic sites, it has more awareness put on it” (Community organization participant 9, 2015).

The policy platform acknowledges the historical significance of Nicodemus. “It validates the history...it says it’s important” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). Finally, the national platform that came with the designation has contributed to increased prideful heritage amongst descendants. “It helped strengthen the recognition by descendants themselves on how important the history in that place is” (NPS participant 14, 2015).

The NHS platform has also benefited Nicodemus by providing funding opportunities that may not have been allotted without the national designation status. The “federal presence has the potential to bring money funding, support planning” (NPS participant 11, 2015). This advantage has particularly been the case for the Nicodemus Historical Society, believed to have financially benefited the most from the NHS title. However, even though the NHS label has provided financial opportunities for Nicodemus, “funding has diminished over time” (NPS participant 10, 2015). While the benefits of the NHS title remain, the Nicodemus NHS is still in need of increased and steady funding support.

What are the roles of the landscape, key individuals, community, and government partners in contributing to policy outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS?

To understand the role of the Nicodemus web contributing to policy outcomes, the Nicodemus web was analyzed using the CAS) approach (Meek, De Ladurantey, & Newell, 2007; Meek & Lyu, 2010). In my using this method the Nicodemus web

descriptive elements and agents, relationships between and amongst elements and agents of the web, and the role of the web in policy outcomes were analyzed and coded consecutively.

To begin with, *the Nicodemus web descriptive elements and agents* displayed topics of the inadequate visible face of the Nicodemus NHS, the aging Nicodemus community, educational partnerships value, Nicodemus web core agents, superintendent, and NPS engagement, recently proposed NHL designation changes, and the timely national platform for the African American experience. The Nicodemus NHS designation has enhanced the “visibility of the site” (NPS participant 14, 2015). Before, you “couldn't see the town site as much as it does now...I mean its visible you know...they have markers up of where's who's what and that sort of thing so I think that's been beneficial” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015).

In the early 1980's Nicodemus received a community development block grant (CDBG) funds for a new playground, tennis and basketball courts, and newly paved streets. Core agents of the Nicodemus web worked together at that time to get this funding secured successfully. When these infrastructural developments took place, community members were informed that “in a few years this stuff is goanna need maintenance and there are no grant funds available for maintenance” (Descendant participant 2, 2015). Since this time however, there has been little maintenance done and the visual face of the Nicodemus NHS doesn't look like a National park as a result.

Another issue contributing to this poor image of the Nicodemus NHS is the lack of satisfactory and modern park signage and imagery. “Usually its these grand buildings, or a district of a lot of buildings, or a lot of development, a lot of *whoopteedoo* and this is really subtle” (NPS participant 11, 2015). “Is this really a ghost town, where is everybody at? I see houses, I see some cars, are the people not here” (Descendant participant 1, 2015). These are the echoed perceptions of the visual face of the Nicodemus NHS, which is seen to negatively impact the visitor experience to the Nicodemus NHS.

In addition to the poor visual face of Nicodemus, the town is considered an “aging community” (NPS participant 11, 2015). Not many young people live there and those who do are moving away (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Some participants believe the younger generation is leaving Nicodemus because there is no work for them there. This is greatly contributing to the aging and dwindling population in Nicodemus. The NPS is “uncertain whether there actually will be people living in the community...the park service may be telling the history of the town in a ghost town at some point in time, which is a real fear” (NPS participant 14, 2015). If this should happen, Nicodemus will become like most National Parks, lacking the “onsite living history.” There is a great need for core Nicodemus web agents to reach out and provide opportunities to the younger generation.

In aiding with outreach, educational partnerships are considered valuable for the Nicodemus NHS. Most importantly, such partnerships have the potential to improve

awareness of Nicodemus, increase historical and sociological scholarly research, and improve the environmental and physical conditions of the park. Also, they allow students the opportunity to learn and explore new concepts and procedures in public policy, community engagement, architectural studies, and national park planning.

In addition to educational partners, the Nicodemus web is diverse with core agents that impact policy outcomes. These individual, institutional, organizational, and government agents are considered “core” because of their continuous involvement preserving the Nicodemus legacy. Core individual agents will not be named in this study due to confidentiality and because further research is needed to confirm this study’s findings. Key government and educational Nicodemus web agents, however, included the NPS, Nicodemus Township Board, Kansas State University, and the University of Kansas. Central community Nicodemus web agents included the Nicodemus Historical Society, the Buffalo Soldiers Association, and the former Kansas Black Farmers Association. All of these institutions and organizations appear to carry their own power in strengthening the Nicodemus web and the policy results for the Nicodemus NHS.

Not all the main Nicodemus web agents choose to collaborate with other agents or are even aware of their influence and role within the web. “There's always going to be the rogue...the people that say the hell with you I'm going to do what I damn well please” (NPS participant 13, 2015). By not working and collaborating effectively with other Nicodemus web agents, rogue agents impact the Nicodemus NHS policy outcomes.

The ever-changing superintendent position which has not been steady since the Nicodemus NHS designation is also considered a descriptive Nicodemus web element. The superintendent “works with the community. What message they bring and how they substantiate support by their actions...makes a big difference with the community members” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). This study’s data shows the superintendent message as valuable for community and visitor interactions and sustaining relationships and partnerships just to name a few.

The NPS engages with the Nicodemus web agents through monthly programs and annual events. Descendants play a crucial role being the primary legacy holders of the town. “The legacy of Nicodemus before it was a park unit, the knowledge of Nicodemus, the importance of Nicodemus really was with the people of Nicodemus. Even though they might have moved far away, they still had very much the family connections to the town.” (NPS participant 11, 2015).

Another policy element of the Nicodemus web is the recent proposed designation expansion of the existing NHL policy, which includes structures and landscapes in the Nicodemus Township and a surrounding nearby area, and the Kebar area in the Wild Horse Township (Reed & Wallace, 2013). The Nicodemus “story really has never been told at a landscape level and identifying the whole township as a part of that story...identifying it as a traditional cultural property...as really part of an ongoing importance to those who live there now and those who don't live there but are connected

by family and traditional connections. That is step one of identification and acknowledgment the park service can take” (NPS participant 11, 2015).

The NPS views “traditional” as values, customs, and ways of life of living people that are passed on from older to younger generations and “cultural” as customs, beliefs, and social bodies. (National Park Service, 2016d). A traditional cultural property, therefore highlights the role the physical place played in a people’s historical principles, customs, and ways of life. The proposed policy change amends and expands the Nicodemus Historic District designation of 1976 (Reed & Wallace, 2013). The expansion of the existing NHL policy includes structures and landscapes in the Nicodemus Township and a surrounding nearby area, and the Kebar area in the Wild Horse Township.

The final Nicodemus web descriptive element is the timely national platform for the African American experience. This year, 2016, marks the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service and the 20th anniversary of the Nicodemus NHS and the 40th anniversary of the Nicodemus Historic District designations (National Park Foundation, 2015; National Park Service, 2016c). Complimentary to these milestone dates, Nicodemus is “right at a juncture (of) time you know all the anniversaries of the big civil rights legislation(s) are starting to happen, the park service itself is looking at the history of Reconstruction, and Nicodemus is at the tail end and a result of that Reconstruction history so there's a way to link to that” (NPS participant 14, 2015).

In contrast to the positive historical milestones discussed are recent acts of racism, murder, references to the confederacy, and in particular the recent Mother Emmanuel AME church shooting that took place in Charleston, South Carolina (Ellis, 2015; National Park Service, 2016a; National Park Service, 2016b). The Mother Emanuel church is one of many buildings considered historically valuable as a part of the National Register Charleston Old Historic District in South Carolina. In June of 2015, when an unfamiliar Caucasian male gunned down nine church members, including the preacher of the Mother Emanuel AME church, during a Bible study class, he allegedly targeted the specific church location due to his misconstrued perception of its historical significance. This story is viewed as being relevant to the Nicodemus NHS not just historically and through the AME church connection, but also in utilizing the milestone anniversary platform to further promote the African American experience in America

Turning to *relationships between and amongst elements and agents of the Nicodemus web*, this study found subjects of poor NPS communications and challenging bureaucratic procedures, the contractual and valued NPS and Nicodemus Historical Society partnership, and partnership challenges and successes. NPS procedures and processes seem to reflect slow drawn out communication outcomes as shown by the participant quote below:

Over a month ago, I sent an email to an NPS employee, and asked specifically about what's going on and I still have not gotten an email back. That's typical of what happens. They get caught up in several different projects that their working on and oh we missed that deadline well...were not a priority or we get shuffled around or we're just overwhelmed because they got to many projects their working. (I was) under the impression that you know yep now we're a national park we're going to see some changes. Well you see how

long it's taken to get to this point. In the process I have learned that you know basically that's just a big slow gray elephant and how it moves. (Descendant participant 1, 2015)

All of these above noted aspects of the NPS and its relationships within the Nicodemus web are significant. The NPS' relationship with descendants and other Nicodemus web members is a key factor in the success or failure of policy outcomes.

Aside from these above issues, the Nicodemus Historical Society and the NPS have worked together and have a valuable relationship in the future preservation of Nicodemus. "Working with the Nicodemus Historical Society, the park service has been pretty successfully you know doing monthly programs" (NPS participant 10, 2015). The NPS has "a cooperative agreement with the historical society, that they are supposed to be available for them for six hours a month to assist them with identifying photographs and resources they can use in the various projects" (Community organization participant 7, 2015).

Partnerships are extremely valuable for the Nicodemus NHS policy outcomes. As shown by this participant statement below, partnership challenges hinder the NHS progress:

There's a few in the community who want to keep Nicodemus and island...you know we're Black we need to stay Black, we're a Black community and all of that stuff...well you just can't do that and it be successful. I mean you have to involve the whole community...Black, white, yellow, green, purple. Yeah it's a well-known fact that Nicodemus was the only all Black settlement west of the Mississippi surviving the Reconstruction and all that...but you know you got to adapt with the times and there isn't but three of us here that's you know able to do anything so I hope to keep that focus on it I think we're just hurting ourselves by not you know allowing or embracing other people to come in. (Descendant participant 2, 2015)

These apparent challenges to partnerships with outsiders are influence policy goals and outcomes. Minimal efforts are in place to increase educational partnerships, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is no longer funding the housing complex in Nicodemus, and “the Township Board has not always been in their favor” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). Additionally, the Kansas Black Farmers Association is no longer active and the American Legion easement negotiation failed.

All of these relationships are highly significant for the preservation of Nicodemus, and each in their own contributing way. Educational partnerships bring awareness, research, funding, and increased knowledge. Housing in Nicodemus is essential for locals and also to use as a space for the NPS offices and Visitor’s Center. The Township Board is the voice of Nicodemus and its representation. The Kansas Black Farmers Association “had plans to build their own building to actually house a full commercial kitchen along with the flour mill co-op production sanction in the building, and then storing, and some offices...and all that kind of fell through” (Resident non-descendant participant 4, 2015). This organization was a good model for economic growth and increased awareness of Nicodemus. Finally, the American Legion partnership for the schoolhouse easement was vital in properly preserving the building and its history.

One partnership that did work out well recently was the Kentucky train tour trip. As mentioned previously, early Nicodemus settlers traveled mainly from the state of Kentucky by train and wagon (Everett, 1986; Kansas City Kansas Community College Cable Channel 17, 2012; Kansas Historical Society, 2014; Katz, 1971; Wigfall, 2014).

The Nicodemus Historical Society partnered with the Kentucky historical society to host a re-enactment train tour trip. Descendants and other attendees “spent an afternoon at the state historical society in Kentucky ...so then we brought the tour to Ellis” (Community organization participant 7, 2015).

During the tours, real life descendants and individuals connected to the land or place of historical significance performed re-enactments. This type of partnership allows outsiders and non-core Nicodemus web agents to reconnect with the historical significance as it relates to their lives. “It’s through living history programs that we can give to the general public that will hope to engage not only the descendants to participate as living history as individuals when also the public to learn about the history through these living history programs” (Community organization participant 7, 2015).

To investigate *the role of the Nicodemus web in policy outcomes*, I analyzed the Nicodemus web descriptive elements and agents and the relationships between them using the CAS approach (Meek, De Ladurantey, & Newell, 2007; Meek & Lyu, 2010). I coded the role of the Nicodemus web in policy outcomes according to the descriptive elements and relationships within the web. Themes for the role of the Nicodemus web in policy outcomes were complicated NPS easement procedures, NPS cultural competency issues, descendant landownership conflicts, and the value in strengthening the Nicodemus web for policy goals

The NPS easement procedures are considered complicated and time consuming. Contributing to these procedures are the NPS requirements and expectations of partnering

with land owners in preservation efforts. Also, landowners have trust issues with NPS. Contributing to this is the notion of “distrust (of) people in uniform” (NPS participant 14, 2015). While polices are in place to protect the Nicodemus NHS, poor communication and complicated easement processes are greatly contributing to poor preservation outcomes. An example of such unsatisfactory outcomes was found with the failed Schoolhouse agreement, which could have greatly contributed to the preservation of the building.

As mentioned prior, some see a lack of cultural awareness amongst NPS workers in Nicodemus. This cultural awareness issue is greatly impacting NPS’ relationship with the local community and the Nicodemus NHS policy outcomes. The NPS staff should be “knowledgeable in the field of the African American experience” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015). “When you have the perpetrator in the position of power and control and interpretation of the perpetrated, you’re going to get a skewed perspective. You’ll never be able to get what is needed in terms of the true story. So what do we need? We need people that understands us culturally” (Nicodemus descendant participant 1, 2015).

There is “an issue at every park in some way. There's some cultural awareness training, there’s tribal consultation training, there’s a lot of modules of ways to address it” (NPS participant 10, 2015). However, there is no known specific training module for such a place as Nicodemus or for African American historical communities, amidst living, breathing, and historically contributing descendants. This lack of cultural

awareness and unspecified cultural training procedures puts the NPS at a furthered distance from the other Nicodemus web agents and contributes to unsatisfactory policy outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS.

Descendant land ownership issues are also impacting preservation policy outcomes. “See that disconnect and the fact that the family's will squabble within themselves internally about what happens to their land and who should be in control of that land as a family...that means that there's no unified strategy about the place” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). If the newly proposed policy change to amend and expand the Nicodemus Historic District designation of 1976 takes place, it will be crucial that family conflicts are addressed and settled in order to best implement the needed preservation efforts in and around Nicodemus (National Park Service, 2016d).

These above noted policy changes will include more land and the structures on them to be preserved and acknowledged. In implementing such an effort, it is necessary to comprehend the actual history of the land itself. While the families may have internal conflicts about themselves, it is important that such agents of the Nicodemus web are understanding of the history of the land, as it relates to their own ancestral ties. It “soothes us to understand how we fit on the landscape...and you know just from an environmentally sustainable aspect I think it's important to understand that to sustain our culture and our history” (NPS participant 14, 2015). These interconnected issues of landownership, NPS facade easement policies, and family conflicts intertwined with the

historical value of the landscape truly reflect the complexity of the NHS policy influence in Nicodemus.

“It’s important to strengthen the web so that everybody is working together, that is a weakness in the web.... everybody trying to doing their own thing in the web. I don’t think it’s necessarily bad but there are ways the web could work together more and be a lot stronger” (NPS participant 10, 2015). The Nicodemus web is important for involving the younger generation, preserving the schoolhouse and other buildings, obtaining infrastructural maintenance, and improving the visual face of the Nicodemus NHS to ultimately improve policy results. “The web is valuable in preserving the story of Nicodemus, its valuable in preserving the town itself. There is strength in numbers, more perspectives, more skills. If you get more people that want to be involved they can only make a stronger web that ultimately helps Nicodemus survive” (NPS participant 10, 2015).

What are current and needed preservation resources and policy improvement recommendations for Nicodemus?

To generate policy improvement recommendations from this study’s data, I further analyzed the Nicodemus web using CAS approach (Meek, De Ladurantey, & Newell, 2007; Meek & Lyu, 2010). In applying the CAS approach, current and needed resources *and* policy improvement recommendations were collectively identified to answer this final research question. Because the Nicodemus web carries a level of responsibility for the Nicodemus NHS policy outcomes, the current and needed resources

for the web are relevant in implementing policy improvement recommendations for Nicodemus.

Nicodemus web current resources were the annual Nicodemus homecoming celebration, descendants living on the Nicodemus NHS, the Buffalo Solider Association, University of Kansas, and Nicodemus Historical Society partnerships, the Nicodemus landscape, and the local farming industry. Being “able to pull together homecoming every year...is definitely a positive for the Nicodemus web” (NPS participant 10, 2015). Nicodemus descendants and friends have gathered for the Homecoming Emancipation Celebration for over 125 years (KU Medical Center, 2016; Smith, 2015). This event is traditionally set to celebrate not only the emancipation of the slaves, but also the historical legacy of the Nicodemus township. The NPS works with descendants and locals to help plan annual event. Descendants from all over the country come to the celebration, as well as local community organizations, educational partners, and other pertinent agents of the Nicodemus web.

Traditions of the homecoming celebration include vendors’ sales of food and crafts, Buffalo Soldiers Association reenactments, horse rides, park tours, a parade, a fashion show, a pancake breakfast, as well as a church service, dancing, and much more. “It’s when we the community is putting together the homecoming were engaging as many people on the town site and outside the town site as possible” (Descendant participant 1, 2015). The Nicodemus web is at is best for the planning and

implementation of the annual homecoming. This annual celebration event is considered an extremely valuable resource for maintaining the Nicodemus web connections.

Descendants living on the Nicodemus NHS site is another treasure for the Nicodemus web. “We have a unique situation here in Nicodemus because we are living history” (Resident Non-descendant participant 4, 2015). This is considered special because the descendants can be active participants in the sharing of the Nicodemus story, and visitors can better connect with their story. At times, however, NPS workers have displayed a “lack of real sincere, genuine interest” towards park visitors (Descendant participant 1, 2015). Nicodemus descendants are often not acknowledged by NPS workers to visitors.

This lack of acknowledgment creates a poor park experience for many visitors who come to the Nicodemus NHS sometimes resulting in written complaints. It also creates a negative rift in NPS and descendant relationships. “There are very few sites that the park service had designated that have people living on it as a place that was still surviving” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). On a consistent basis, visitors ask, “are any of the descendants of the original settlers still in the area? And when you would say yes, there's twenty people that still live here in town that are direct descendants of those original settlers, their faces would light up” (NPS participant 14, 2015).

Partnerships of extreme value to the Nicodemus web are the Buffalo Soldiers Association, as it is considered “one of the most prominent ones in the U.S.” (Descendant participant 1, 2015). The Buffalo Soldiers Association is highly involved in many

programs and events for the Nicodemus NHS, taking a great role in sharing the stories of Nicodemus. The University of Kansas Spencer Research Library is another resourceful partnership. This partnership provides “open access to researchers” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015) and preservation of historical artifacts for Nicodemus. Finally, as mentioned prior, the Nicodemus Historical Society is considered valuable for the Nicodemus web, as it is the main connection between the NPS and descendants living outside of Nicodemus. There are many programs and events sponsored by the Nicodemus Historical Society that further promote the Nicodemus story.

Besides partnerships, the land is also a very significant resource for the Nicodemus web. “The land is so revered and you know it was a primary reason that the people came there so that they could have their own land and be in a free place” (NPS participant 14, 2015). Many descendants of original settlers still own land in Nicodemus, which is considered a treasured resource for the web. The land itself is a part of the Nicodemus legacy and descendants take great pride in land ownership because of this.

Finally, the local farming industry is also considered a valued resource for the Nicodemus web. The farming industry of Nicodemus is “hard work but its rewarding work” (Resident Non-descendant participant 4, 2015). It is a hidden jewel trade that has been there since day one of the Nicodemus township and amongst the early settlers. Sharing industry techniques with the younger generation could serve as useful in preserving the Nicodemus legacy.

Nicodemus web needed resources are financial support from wealthy Nicodemus descendants, professional and educational consultants for community development and scholarly research, local business partnerships, tourism, and economy development, and improved building preservation efforts. Some needed resources are considered current resources not being tapped into. One such resource are wealthy Nicodemus descendants. “There are rich descendants in (and outside of) Nicodemus” (NPS participant 13, 2015). “They’re living well, their children...that money needs to come back into that entity” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). “These people don't necessarily have to live in Nicodemus, they could be descendants...that live elsewhere but are willing to spend time to come together and formulate and put together a plan for us” (Resident Non-descendant participant 4, 2015). Tapping into the wealthy Nicodemus descendant population for stabilizing financial support could serve to benefit the strengthening of the Nicodemus web.

More professional consultants and other local college and/or university scholars are also needed resources for the Nicodemus web. In seeking professional consultants, “tapping into professional organizations and professionals that are just as well aware of their own survival rate as Black or multicultural organizations” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015) is suggested. More scholarly researchers are also needed to build upon the Nicodemus web. “We just don't have the people to come in to spend time just doing that kind of research” (Resident Non-descendant participant 4, 2015). There are “universities not too far away so if I was somebody at the NHS, I would be trying to

make partnerships reasons to come to my area” (Community organization participant 9, 2015).

Aside from professional partnerships and trainings, there is not really a business economy in Nicodemus. “I’m not talking a 7-11 or convenience store but there could be any number of things...you know some of the ladies do crafts and stuff throughout the county not only in Nicodemus and that could be a good retail outlet there in Nicodemus as people come through to visit the NHS” (Nicodemus descendant participant 2, 2015). There is a need for the Nicodemus web to be strengthened in this way, to build the economy of Nicodemus and also promote the Nicodemus NHS. A part of hosting more visitors, also means improving “social media and getting the word out” (Community organization participant 9, 2015). There is a need for better marketing and the Nicodemus web could greatly contribute to this as well as benefit from it. By better organizing the web and strengthening relationships alone, communication efforts could be greatly improved.

Nearby towns and businesses are seen as additional needed resources. There is a need for increasing and strengthening such relationships. Such entities could be considered Nicodemus web agents whom may or may not be aware of these potential valued connections. When visitor’s travel to the Nicodemus NHS, “on their way through they’ll stop in Hill City and get some gas or you know that type of thing” (Descendant participant 2, 2015). Surrounding towns and their businesses, such as in nearby Hill City,

are seen as current resources for the Nicodemus web, and they are not necessarily being tapped into.

In properly identifying such businesses, more collaborative efforts could be set in place to better promote and preserve the Nicodemus NHS. To improve the Nicodemus NHS policy outcomes, “we need to connect it to something more than just the Black history” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). “People aren't goanna choose one site to go to. I think any partnership any ways you can package it to a visitor is goanna help. Why come here, because we have great history and there are other things to do here” (Community organization participant 9, 2015). Partnering with local communities that share common tourism goals is considered valuable and needed. To promote the Nicodemus NHS as a packaged tourist attraction could improve the current state of the Nicodemus web and NHS policy results.

As it pertains to the building preservation needs in Nicodemus, such work will “require other parts of the Nicodemus web to take the leadership on that” (NPS participant 10, 2015). Although there are opposing views on the role of the NPS for building preservation, it is hoped that the NPS will “actually restore the buildings as was promised” (Descendant participant 2, 2015). The “physical preservation of the buildings is all about the money” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015). Not only will improved preservation efforts of the 5 buildings require participation from non NPS Nicodemus web agents, but it is also in need of funding support. These two factors alone have significant impact on preservation outcomes in Nicodemus.

Based on the above stated findings, *policy improvement recommendations* for the Nicodemus NHS were to change federal budget allocations, acknowledge the importance of the Nicodemus web, improve partnership efforts, better organize the Nicodemus web, educate Nicodemus web agents on policy goals, host a community summit and create a strategic plan, change NPS descendant hiring policies, change NPS oral history policies, create policies for acknowledging descendants in front of visitors, create a permanent and updated Visitor's Center, further develop technology initiatives, and improve the visual image of the Nicodemus NHS and township. Leading these policy suggestions is the idea to change federal budget appropriation in order to better preserve places such as Nicodemus. "Free up some space in the budget so that there's more money available for the ones that are struggling. Here's the problem with that though, the one's that yell the loudest in congress get the money in their state. Whose doing that for Nicodemus? In the state? That's a policy issue" (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). Also, it is recommended to "Set up a credit union...you have some funds to match with to say hey we're investing in our place, come and help us, come invest with us, not give us a handout" (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). Securing a funding plan should be a high priority for the Nicodemus NHS and community.

In considering the current and needed resources of the Nicodemus web, policy improvement recommendations begin with better acknowledging the significance of the web. There is a need to better organize the web and perhaps attain funds for Nicodemus web agent travel outreach. "There is no single collective representative for the

community of Nicodemus, for the NPS to talk to” (NPS participant 13, 2015). It seems having such an entity would strengthen the heart of the of Nicodemus web, which has previously been acknowledged as the individuals or organizations that serve as core connections to the town.

The “park service really needs to work on that in terms of partnerships” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015). “It is not really appropriate for the park service to be walking around and bypassing the local historical society in doing a lot of the outreach to the descendant community” (NPS participant 13, 2015). Communication amongst Nicodemus web agents is imperative and also necessary for organizing and strengthening the Nicodemus web. “As long as the web is comprehensive and it’s a real web an intact web that doesn't have holes. Because those holes are where the ropes go through and there needs to be a very strong executive director who gathers the key de facto leaders of the community” (NPS participant 13, 2015).

As shown in the below NPS participant response, organizing core Nicodemus web individual and organization agents together into one collective is advised:

I think that there needs to be some form of singular community collective that is professionally run. That runs by somebody that's got some free time this year, for a one-year term. There needs to be a real Nicodemus preservation association with an executive director who answers to a board whose representatives represent the housing authority, maybe the descendants in California, the historical society, etc. But there is a need for a collective which sort of reflects the socialistic approach that is professionally run. Having an executive director whose job it is to educate all of the groups and the also in a broad manner, educate the broader community about what is going on, because the historical society can't do it alone. The key to success is to make sure that you got avenues of communication going on through all the rings and back to you. That's why

this idea of an executive director who is responsible for collective communication across all geographies and all organizations is imperative. (NPS participant 13, 2015)

Being more solidified and practicing improved and continued outreach to pertinent Nicodemus web agents could truly make a difference in policy outcomes. Aiding the community collective with improved communication and outreach, the current technical status in Nicodemus is another area in need of great change.

The comprehension of the Nicodemus NHS policy is similarly considered significant. The “difference in perception between key players” and “huge misperception by the broader community of Nicodemus” (NPS participant 13, 2015) contributes to the current state of the Nicodemus web and NHS policy outcomes. There are “thousands (of) descendants across the country and every one of them has a different understanding and perspective” (NPS participant 13, 2015) of the NPS role in Nicodemus and the Nicodemus NHS policy guidelines and goals. It would serve as beneficial to the entire Nicodemus web for descendants and local community members to be better informed of the NPS role and the NHS policies. This could strengthen the dynamics of the current poorly structured Nicodemus web. Such initiatives would focus on “what it means to partner with a federal agency” (NPS participant 13, 2015).

As an interconnected complex system, the Nicodemus community needs to “have a summit” (Descendant participant 1, 2015). This is advised in order to “create a good strategic plan” (NPS participant 14, 2015) for the Nicodemus NHS. Although NPS policy requires strategic plans for its landmark locations, it appears as though either such policies are not being implemented, or they need to change for the better. The last known strategic plan for the Nicodemus NHS was created in 2009 (National Park Service, 2009).

Also, as mentioned prior, there is a need for the hiring of culturally aware and/or African American NPS employees in Nicodemus. There “needs to be a consciousness raising” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015). Changing these hiring practices are pertinent policy improvement recommendations for the Nicodemus NHS.

As previously mentioned, federal hiring policies are competitive and impacting Nicodemus descendant applicant outcomes. NPS has hired few descendants or locals since the designation. It is suggested that these issues be addressed through the changing of NPS hiring policies, in order to better accommodate and support the unique Nicodemus NHS living history model. “At least 3 of those [NPS staff] positions should be designated for descendants of Nicodemus” (Resident non-descendant participant 4, 2015). Changing the policies on hiring descendants is seen as necessary for improving the Nicodemus NHS results.

It is also suggested that new solutions be sought for addressing NPS policy issues of accepting layered oral histories amongst Nicodemus descendants and locals. One obvious solution is to modify NPS oral history policies for places such as Nicodemus. This policy change would be inclusive of comprehending and accepting that oral history is considered “layered” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). This means that one piece of oral information could serve to be a clue to lead to a larger story, or generate tangible artifacts for proof of the historical event. Also, oral history could serve to be incorrect altogether, which requires more intense focus on the historical legacy efforts in Nicodemus. As is the case in Nicodemus, oral histories are built upon through many layered voices, artifacts, and avenues; that is why this policy improvement is necessary for the Nicodemus (NHS Hoopes, 2014).

In utilizing “tribal consultation training” (NPS participant 10, 2015), the Native American partnership model is seen as useful in addressing these NPS oral history policy issues. “The US government has a special different relationship with Native American tribes because it’s considered government to government. So for us to say to another government that we don’t believe what your saying has a heck of a lot more consequence than it does to members of a local community that does not have that stature...there might be ways in that technique that we work with Native American tribes that might be useful to transfer it” (NPS participant 14, 2015). Reconsidering the NPS oral history policies are pertinent in improving policy outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS.

Acknowledging descendants in front of visitors is another policy improvement suggestion. “Introduce them as descendants...say let me introduce you to a descendant that lives right here” (Descendant participant 1, 2015). While there should also be solutions for the NPS to verify descendants, the acknowledging of descendants is considered valuable regardless of the situation. These protocols should be a part of the Nicodemus NHS strategic plan and/or policies for program implementation improvements. Additionally, to better improve the overall visitor’s experience at the Nicodemus NHS, it is suggested that organized tours be further implemented and “having more things for people to do” (Descendant participant 3, 2015). Organized tours seek specific individuals and organizations that have focused interest in Nicodemus. Also, in increasing visitor activities in Nicodemus, the visitor experience will be enhanced.

In regards to the landscape, the NPS doesn't need to "have a residency there" and Nicodemus is considered "a great training site" (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). In considering the complex relationship between the NPS, descendants, and the local community, it is undecided on whether the NPS should physically be on site in Nicodemus. "Because its isolated...it's a natural place to meditate to work out issues of behavior and attitudes...it's like Harper's Ferry, that's a place that people came to mainly for historic preservation training" (Educational institution participant 6, 2015). As mentioned before, the NPS offices and Visitor's Center are currently on site, inside of the Township hall, which is not desirable. "Of course when you move off site you lose the connection with the community too. I think that is important personally" (NPS participant 10, 2015). Although there are many factors to consider for the NPS presence in Nicodemus, the policy improvement suggestion for this issue is to finally make a collective decision on this matter.

It is also recommended to "capture footage of the actual building and make it available electronically" (NPS participant 10, 2015). This in addition to increased social media and website usage for further promoting the Nicodemus NHS is suggested. Also, the NPS should "hire more tech people" (Educational institution participant 5, 2015). The Nicodemus NHS is on Facebook, but the posts are considered minimal in relation to the interacting with the broader Nicodemus web members. Also, monthly electronic newsletters have not been regularly produced within the past few years and the Nicodemus NHS website is rarely updated with new information (National Park Service, 2016c). All of these technology essentials are considered necessary for improving policy outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS.

Finally, the visibility, promotion, and development of the Nicodemus Main street is an active policy improvement recommendation for the Nicodemus NHS. The Nicodemus NHS and township lacks park beautification efforts and “fails to incorporate it into a beautification of the mainstream” (Descendant participant 1, 2015). As a national historic site, Nicodemus is in dire need of park beautification applications in order to be more appealing to visitors” (Resident non-descendant participant 4, 2015).

Currently, local descendants are working with the NPS, community members, and the township board to install interpretive audio streetlights with banners and flags on the first two main blocks in Nicodemus. By closing off the roads nearby, the Nicodemus NHS visitor experience would be an interactive walking tour. It is also proposed to implement “a community well which is an interpretive exhibit you walk up to and look into and see a reflection of (historical) people that are at the well” discussing the happenings of the original settlers (Descendant participant 1, 2015). This well would be located at the site of the original community well of Nicodemus. Focusing on the beautification of the Nicodemus NHS would greatly enhance policy results.

Field notes summary

The reflective notes include my summary, prejudices, understandings, and previous thoughts relating to the Nicodemus NHS (NPS, 2016c). Reflective field notes were recorded prior to, during, and after official data collection and analysis. Emerging themes from my field notes were all phone interviews going very well but in person interviews would have been more agreeable, providing more of a personal touch to the

interview experience. Also, the elder generation seems tired, they have been advocating a long time and I was consistently told by participants that the work I am doing is valuable and I am a part of the next generation to carry the Nicodemus legacy forward through my research and work. I feel truly humbled to be a part of the Nicodemus story.

Summary

The cultural impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus has failed to acknowledge the undervalued descendant population and the importance of local community needs. The historical impact of the policy designation has fallen short of recognizing oral histories to interpret the Nicodemus story. Aside from this though, preservation efforts have been strengthened mainly through the Nicodemus Historical Society and five Nicodemus NHS buildings restorative work. This study's data portrays the NHS policy as minimally benefiting Nicodemus. From a controversial NPS presence to the mismanagement of town money, the harms to the Nicodemus legacy are robust and in need of further attention. The financial and promotional benefits of having a national platform can truly aid the Nicodemus NHS in addressing some of its issues.

The Nicodemus web is as a frigidly structured network of inclusive of landscape and constituents charged with preserving the Nicodemus legacy. Although it is delicate, the Nicodemus web is the key to addressing the policy issues in Nicodemus. Additionally, the fragmented partnerships and impending policy designation changes create a greater need for strengthening the Nicodemus web. Focusing on the Nicodemus web agent relationships will assist with policy issues such as complicated facade

easements, NPS cultural awareness concerns, and landownership conflicts. Finally, policy improvement suggestions are displayed throughout this study's data, and most specifically through highlighting the current and needed resources for the Nicodemus web. From changing federal budget allocations to hosting a community summit, the interview data reflected many necessary recommendations for improving policy outcomes in Nicodemus.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

I conducted this study to explore the cultural and historical impact of the NHPA and NHS designation in Nicodemus, Kansas (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; see Appendix B and C; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c). In doing so, I used a qualitative methodology and ethnographic framework (Creswell, 2013; Gans, 2010). With this chosen approach, I thoroughly examined the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS legislation. I also used the CAS theory (Meek, De Ladurantey, & Newell, 2007; Meek & Lyu, 2010) to critically evaluate the Nicodemus descendants, residents, volunteers, partnering educational institutions, businesses, community organizations, and government officials who are working independently and collaboratively to preserve the Nicodemus legacy. In conducting this evaluation, I interviewed 11 participants who were members of the Nicodemus web. These particular participants provided in depth information on the current structure and functioning of the individuals and groups who are serving at the center of the Nicodemus web.

The Nicodemus web is an underdeveloped complex adaptive system that is in need of partnership strengthening and organization to improve preservation policy outcomes for the Nicodemus NHS. Ultimately, the NHS policy has only minimally helped Nicodemus since its designation. Some unfavorable issues reportedly contributed by the NHS policy were the NPS presence in Nicodemus, NPS staff transfer policies, and the failed Schoolhouse facade easement deal. Aside from this however, preservation efforts have benefited Nicodemus by providing a national platform and increased

opportunities for funding. In this chapter, I will review key findings from my investigation and then discuss study limitations, recommendations, and social change implications. My data highlights suggestions for policy changes, which I will discuss in further detail.

Interpretation of the Findings

To explore the cultural and historical impact of the Nicodemus NHS preservation policies, I used the CAS framework to examine pertinent elements, relationships, and existing resources within the Nicodemus web (Angrosino, 2007; Capra, 1996; Creswell, 2013; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Sangasubana, 2011). Five main Nicodemus web topics served as the focus for this study, concluding with an additional four subjects that summarized the cultural and historical impact of the NHS destination in Nicodemus. I have detailed and narrated these foremost patterns below, followed by my field issues, and interpretations of the overall findings.

First, important descriptive elements of the Nicodemus web were the inadequate visibility of the Nicodemus NHS, the aging community, fragmented partnerships, recently proposed NHL designation changes, and the timely national platform for the African American experience. This snapshot of the current state of the Nicodemus web portrays a delicate network of landscape, individual and group agents supporting an underrepresented historical gem. Future preservation outcomes will rely on the livelihood, connectivity, and sustainability of the Nicodemus web (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Seymour & Levin, 2015).

Aside from partnership building, the dwindling Nicodemus community and its inhabitants need revitalizing. Most of the community members are aging (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014) and there is a need for the reenergizing of the Nicodemus legacy. The timeliness of this much needed awakening is now. Not just because of the dwindling population, but also because of the recent designation anniversary celebrations, and the issues of racism and social injustice being faced in today's society (Ellis, 2015; National Park Foundation, 2015; National Park Service, 2016c).

To address these issues, focusing on the complex and adaptive Nicodemus web for improving policy outcomes in Nicodemus is evident from this study's data. Core Nicodemus web sub groups and agents are the key to changing the Nicodemus NHS conditions. It is vital that these individuals, institutions, organizations, and government agencies be made aware of the value in their collaboration and its relevancy to the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS designation outcomes (Bushe & Marshak, 2015). In labeling the Nicodemus web as a complex adaptive system, intentional and focused communication amongst individuals and organizations who hold key roles within the system can greatly impact the system organization and results. Because it is not currently possible to obtain direct access to all agents within the Nicodemus web, it is very probable to ingest sub groups with necessary feedback information to produce a sense of order (Johnson, 2009) within the Nicodemus web. This circulation of feedback will breed the desired modifications within the Nicodemus web and preservation policy outcomes.

For a sense of order to take place within the Nicodemus web, partnerships and relationships need to be more of a priority for the Nicodemus NHS. These requirements and suggestions for the NPS to coordinate collaborations and partnerships are greatly stressed throughout the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS legislation (see Appendix B and C). Therefore, the priority should be to better adhere to these policy regulations. According to the CAS approach, reinforcing partnerships can alter the dynamics of the Nicodemus web, making it easier to maintain, as compared to its current fragile and unorganized state (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Seymour & Levin, 2015).

Finally, in further stressing the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS policy necessities of partnerships and shared responsibility, seeking the Nicodemus web development for its abundant resources is highly applicable and necessary. The Nicodemus web is rich and plentiful with resources not being fully used. Community networks can learn from past behaviors, adapt, self-regulate, and organize to improve circumstances (Capra, 1996). Furthermore, the Nicodemus web is considered open and living, which means that it can be easily influenced and can adapt according to feedback information (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Johnson, 2009). In considering these CAS concepts for the Nicodemus web, the use of feedback information and partnership building can greatly enhance the accessibility to the needed Nicodemus web resources.

As noted in this study's introduction, the NHPA (see Appendix B), recognizes historical places significant to U.S. history (NPS, 2013). Also, the overall purpose of the

NHS legislation was to “preserve, protect, and interpret” (see Nicodemus National Historic Site Bill, 1996, Section b1) the Nicodemus legacy. Additionally, both of these policies encourage cooperative partnerships for upholding these preservation laws. Central matters describing the cultural and historical impact of the NPHA and Nicodemus NHS legislation begin with the NPS presence and physical location within the Nicodemus community needing reevaluation, along with the entire visitor’s experience. Because both these aspects of the Nicodemus NHS have been in a state of limbo for so long, such a reassessment will require strategic planning and implementing by key Nicodemus web agents.

Further evaluating the Nicodemus NHS programing and preservation efforts will also provide a better understanding of how to improve conditions in Nicodemus. NPS policies and regulations impact the Nicodemus legacy on many levels, such as through the preservation of the five buildings, the oral histories, and hosting monthly educational history events, just to name a few. Also, although all NPS preservation efforts are not seen as fruitful by some, the work that has been done is still considered meaningful and worthwhile.

Although the national platform is a much needed benefit, it is not being fully used to address the current issues faced by the Nicodemus NHS. The NPS did recently initiate a short film series sharing the Nicodemus story on social media. This is a great step towards using its national platform in promoting Nicodemus, but so much more could be done, such as TV commercials, tourism initiatives, or educational ventures. All of these

promotional avenues and more could be more productively enacted by further developing the Nicodemus web.

Lastly, my policy improvement recommendations are a starting point for improving conditions at the Nicodemus NHS and for the Nicodemus community. Nicodemus has received restricted support from the NHPA and NHS policies (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Wigfall, 2014). This lack of legislative support is authorizing the underrepresentation of the Nicodemus NHS through undesirable policy outcomes.

Overall field issues, my personal, and general interpretations of the findings were first that I will go to Nicodemus after this study is approved by Walden and share my research findings with the NPS and local community. This study's data may contribute new solutions for the Nicodemus NHS. Second, the Nicodemus NHS staffing changes provide a timely platform for sharing this study's data with the NPS and Nicodemus community, it may provide useful guidance for the new NPS staff.

My findings confirm the complexity and the value of the Nicodemus web for policy outcomes and improvements (Johnson, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). Key to the CAS approach, are the relationships amongst the agents (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). The uncharacterized and under defined Nicodemus web hinders policy efforts. The Nicodemus web relationships are vital for policy advances and preservation results in Nicodemus.

The behaviors of the Nicodemus web agents are based on current and past events and involvements of all agents (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). Examples of such events include the past African American experiences, including slavery, emancipation, and the spirit of freedom once shared amongst the original Nicodemus settlers (Edwards, 2014; Everett, 1986; Kansas City Kansas Community College Cable Channel 17, 2012; Kansas Historical Society, 2014; Katz, 1971; Wigfall, 2014). Also current happenings such as racial and social injustice in America, the NPS housed in Nicodemus, and its relationship with the Nicodemus community. According to this study's data, cultural awareness and partnership building plays a major factor in such happenings. These central themes appear to be circulating as feedback information amongst Nicodemus web members and contributing to the unsatisfactory outcomes.

With complex adaptive systems, feedback information can be given or received between agents at any time within the web (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). This causes behavioral patterns to emerge and the adaptation of agent behaviors according to the feedback information being entered into the system. Such adaptations can either improve or weaken the system performance, thus changing the dynamics of the system as a whole (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). The current behavioral patterns of the Nicodemus web define its structure and strength. As the data displays, the Nicodemus web structure is currently under developed, and reflective of the poorly preserved Nicodemus NHS.

Computational modeling is principal for further illustrating and exploring complex adaptive systems (Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2007), such as the Nicodemus web. This method involves using simulation modeling, to highlight CAS certainties, exchanges, and potentials for development (Miller & Page, 2007). Because there is a need for improved partnership and technology efforts in Nicodemus, a computational model could aid in such an initiative (McKee, 2011; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2007). This model would include an accessible interactive database or social media website solely for Nicodemus web agents. Using an interactive computational model to better coordinate the various agents of the Nicodemus web could improve agent communication, increase visitor numbers, aid in partnership developments, and further define the structure for the web just to name a few.

In addition to computational modeling, current and needed resources for the Nicodemus web are important to acknowledge. Collaborative efforts for guiding strategies on policy condition advancements are needed for Nicodemus. In implementing and evaluating activities and policy outcomes in Nicodemus, the results suggests partnerships must be sought after and reinforced. The national heritage area (NHA) theoretical model is considered a prototype for Nicodemus (Laven et al., 2013). NHA's are living landscapes of natural, ethnic, and/or historical significance (Laven et al., 2013; McKee, 2011). The NHA framework seeks to encompass preservation goals with financial, cultural, and constituent objectives. I recommend the Nicodemus web core agents consider exploring NHA model(s) for guidance on partnership strengthening.

In support of my recommendation, research findings by McKee (2011) suggested collaborative park systems, amongst historic landmarks, are connected to and truly managed by cultural landscapes and living communities. Because the Nicodemus web is comparable to the NHA framework, and the data displays the great need for improved collaborations, the NHA framework could be used by the Nicodemus core agents as a tool for improving conditions at the Nicodemus NHS (Laven et al., 2013; McKee, 2011).

This study's data did not disconfirm any of the peer reviewed literature described in chapter 2. In further extending these noted works, the data supports the idea of Nicodemus being underrepresented within the NHL system (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Williams, 2011). This underrepresentation contributes to limited histories being shared, slow moving building preservations, a lack of policy upkeep, and distrust of government workers amongst many other matters (Blakey, 2010; Brunswig et al., 2013; Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008; Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; Inwood, 2009; Ng, 2011; Wigfall, 2014).

The perception of the Nicodemus web metaphorically as roots on a tree, is relevant for understanding the needs of the Nicodemus NHS (Capra, 1996). Capra (1996) gave an analogy exemplifying this perception, in terms of a network of branches, sticks, leaves, and trunk being called a tree. When asked to describe or draw a tree, one will include most of these elements, and yet exclude the tree roots. The issue here is the significance of the roots, being the most extensive fragment of a tree. Additionally, tree roots are interconnected in an underground network with roots from other trees. Therefore, what one defines as a *tree* is a matter of perception. Perceiving the

Nicodemus web in this way is to acknowledge its roots as the various individual and sub group agents who are essential in further developing the organization and strength of the web.

As evident of the data, the CAS approach can be useful in understanding policy results and how legislation impacts people's lives (Desouza, 2011; Innes & Booher, 1999). It can also be used for tourism planning, such as the Nicodemus web being used to improve the visitor experience and park attendance (Baggio et al., 2010). Wigfall (2014) expressed emphasis on partnerships and redefining the park system so that community connections are acknowledged as useful for policy results. My data shows the cultural and historical impact of the policy designation in Nicodemus as being extremely complex and adaptive. The Nicodemus NHS and the Nicodemus web are deeply intertwined and impacting legislation and preservation outcomes.

Limitations of the Study

Central study limitations included a lack of research on African American historical locations (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). To obtain trustworthiness, I reexamined the African American historical locations research highlighted in this study and compared it with my findings. In-person access to the eleven interview participants was also considered a study limitation. To achieve trustworthiness, the phone interviews were conducted with Nicodemus web agents, interviews were recorded on two devices, and field notes were kept before, during, and after each interview. Also, the interview participants were extremely familiar with the conditions in Nicodemus. Finally, my ancestral ties and preconceived ideas of the Nicodemus NHS are worth mentioning as

being addressed through the recording of my field notes and objective analysis of the data. This allowed me to keep my personal views separate from the findings. In following these above mentioned practices, useful data was generated and saturation was reached.

Recommendations

My first recommendations for further research is the study of policy outcomes and cultural awareness practices for designated African American historical locations (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008). Such research would may improve conditions at other similar NPS landmarks and contribute to the research gap on African American historical places. Additionally, the usage of CAS and Computational Modeling for understanding policy impact (McKee, 2011; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2007) should be explored. This may aid in better connecting partnership networks for policy maintenance and sustainability efforts. In addition to computational modeling, I also recommend the exploration of using the NHA paradigm to strengthen the Nicodemus web relationships (Laven et al., 2013; McKee, 2011). It would benefit the Nicodemus web core agents to research the preservation outcomes of similar historical places using the NHA model. Finally, I suggest the further defining and examination of the Nicodemus web structure and its relationship with the Nicodemus NHS outcomes (Hoffman Brandt & Zientek, 2012; McKee, 2011; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2007; Wigfall, 2014). Because the Nicodemus web may serve as a model for other similar networks, it is important to monitor the developments of the Nicodemus web moving forward.

Implications

Areas of potential impact for positive social change at the individual, family, organizational, and policy levels are all defined by the following. First, the data findings suggest the Nicodemus web development and usage could greatly improve current conditions in Nicodemus. Focusing on the relationships and the untapped resources within the web could aid in a better preserved legacy there. Using a computational model to better understand and connect the Nicodemus web agents could provide limitless solutions and opportunities for new partnerships (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). The Nicodemus web agents being aware of their own role within the web could change the structure of the web, strengthening it over time.

Once the web has reached a stronger construction, the changing agents would come to realize the value of their role within the web. They would perceive the impact they have as individuals, family members, organizations, or institutions in preserving the legacy of Nicodemus. Initiating these noted changes within the system would create mindful change with the current feedback information being shared amongst the agents of the Nicodemus web (Johnson, 2009; Miller & Page, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). The results of the above mentioned combined would desirably change the social behaviors and patterns of the Nicodemus web.

Second, the Nicodemus NHS, local community, and landscape are other areas of potential impact for positive social change. Improving preservation initiatives for the 5 buildings and local landscape is highly needed. Such efforts will not only contribute to

the under preserved legacy of Nicodemus, but also the visitors' experience, visual image, and acknowledgement of the value of Nicodemus. Included within this is the need for improved acceptance of oral histories by the NPS. Adjustments to such policies will create a better visitor experience and improve relationships amongst NPS and descendants.

The National Park Service is the third area of potential impact for positive social change. Reevaluating NPS hiring and oral history policies and cultural competencies may positively improve policy effects in Nicodemus. Such actions may lead to better Nicodemus web relationships. Focusing on building relationships amongst NPS and descendants could aid in strengthening the Nicodemus web and ultimately the Nicodemus NHS designation outcomes. Building relationships with local community members and all agents of the web is similar to the NHA model (Laven et al., 2013; McKee, 2011). Using the NHA model to better understand and strengthen the Nicodemus web, will serve as useful in addressing policy issues being faced by the Nicodemus NHS. Ultimately, in making partnerships a major focus area, the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS policies will be truly implemented (see Appendix B and C).

Fourth, other similar historical African American locations carry potential impact for positive social change. My data is unique in terms of the lack of existing research on African American NHL and other historical locations (Ferentinos & Lowe, 2008). Additionally, my suggestions for future research would provide information on policy designation, implementation, and evaluation as it relates to the underrepresentation of

African American NHL and other historical locations. Both of these study elements contribute to building the collective memory of the African-American experience.

Finally, the Nicodemus NHS policy impact is complex and the Nicodemus web is a complex adaptive system. Utilizing the Nicodemus web for positive social change and as a vehicle to better understand how the Nicodemus NHS policy impacts people's lives, can be a powerful and useful approach (Desouza, 2011; Innes & Booher, 1999; see Appendix B and C). The NHPA and Nicodemus NHS policies allow and emphasize the usage of collaborative efforts and cooperative agreements. These policy requirements should be projected through the Nicodemus web agent partnerships. This study's data portrays the Nicodemus web as underdeveloped but extremely valuable, possessing the power to seriously change things for Nicodemus, on all levels. Using complex adaptive systems approach for policy research and comprehension will serve to not only adhere to already written policy regulations and benefit the Nicodemus NHS, but also help other similar African American historical locations.

Recommendations for practice in achieving positive social change begins with a gathering of core agents of the Nicodemus web. My data suggests the need for a professional central Nicodemus collective. This organization would be inclusive of core individuals, organizations, institution, and government agents of the web. With all that is happening, and that has happened in the past, this central collective will represent the leading agents of the web. Such an effort will address issues to improve agent

relationships and communications, preservation outcomes, educational efforts, financial stability, and descendent initiatives.

Nicodemus NHS policy improvement suggestions, as displayed in this study's results, are also offered for practice in achieving positive social change. These legislative recommendations are a starting point for the proposed Nicodemus collective, who are core agents of the Nicodemus web. Beginning with a primary focuses of policy reevaluation, developing the Nicodemus web, and the local Nicodemus community needs, specific advisements as described in this study's data results, will aid in turning this research into practice and generating the much needed positive social change in Nicodemus.

Conclusion

As mentioned previously, this study explored the cultural and historical impact of the preservation policy designation in Nicodemus, Kansas (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; see Appendix B and C; NPS, 2010; NPS, 2016c). The impact of this legislation has been one of significant outcomes. The NHPA and Nicodemus NHS designation has minimally aided in preserving the town, producing many undesirable matters since. Despite these disagreeable involvements, there have been some benefits of the policy impact.

The NHPA and Nicodemus NHS policies highlight the requirements and significance of collaborative work for the sake of preservation (see Appendix B and C). These legislative regulations are suggestive of the value of the Nicodemus web. My findings proposed the Nicodemus web contributes to the Nicodemus NHS policy results.

Many changes are needed within the web in order to improve of the web's behaviors, as they relate to policy impact.

The findings also confirm the complexity and value of the Nicodemus web for policy consequences and enhancements (Johnson, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). In practicing mindful feedback circulation, the Nicodemus web carries great power to generate change within the web. Also, the NHA theoretic model is a suggested example for the Nicodemus NHS (Laven et al., 2013). The data advises partnerships must be further pursued and secured for policy improvements to occur. These findings on the importance of partnerships are complimentary to the original goals of the NHPA and Nicodemus NHS legislations (see Appendix B and C). Complex adaptive systems approach can be used to comprehend societal policy consequences (Desouza, 2011; Innes & Booher, 1999). In classifying the Nicodemus web as complex and adaptive, the cultural and historical impact of the NHS designation in Nicodemus is exceedingly multifaceted and ever changing. Also, the Nicodemus web is a living structure that can be used to enact policy change.

The need for further research is crucial in addressing the issues in Nicodemus and other similar locations (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008). Based on the data, I suggested several recommendations for future research. Also, there are many areas for potential positive social change. Considering my recommendations for a central Nicodemus collective and reevaluating NPS policies to be more conducive for Nicodemus

descendants and the African American culture and experience are necessary for attaining desirable preservation results.

Nicodemus is considered underrepresented, contributing to the misperception and poor societal comprehension of the African American experience (Ferentinos, & Lowe, 2008; Williams, 2011). U.S. Government policies have contributed to the Nicodemus township outcomes since its founding in 1877. Unfortunately, most of these contributions have not been favorable or aiding with town development and legacy preservation. Through controversial policies and program outcomes, remnants of slavery and oppression linger in the midst of the Nicodemus legacy. The original settlers who came to Nicodemus were seeking a new life of freedom with their families (Edwards, 2015; Everett, 1986; Kansas City Kansas Community College Cable Channel 17, 2012; Kansas Historical Society, 2014; Katz, 1971; Wigfall, 2014). This place of promise and hope was taken from them, and they never fully received the blessings of the place called Nicodemus. At that time, the law promised a land of abundance, opportunity, and hope. Currently, descendants of the original settlers are similarly experiencing the failed hopes of the Nicodemus NHS designation results. These issues are deeply rooted within the Nicodemus story and greatly contribute to the current policy outcomes in Nicodemus.

The Nicodemus story still lives on through the landscape, descendants, and other representatives of the Nicodemus web. In its glory, the Nicodemus legacy is a leading spiritual and emblematic image for the African American experience:

But each summer, for a few sweet days, the town's population swells for the homecoming. Children whose ancestors settled this land in the 1870s use the swings on a playground that often sits idle. Cousins snack on catfish sandwiches and play basketball on the court next to Township Hall. Old men and women reminisce about their childhoods, discuss the joys and hardships of rural life in northwest Kansas, and ponder the future of this proud town, one that boomed, went bust and held on. (Smith, 2015, p. A14)

The Nicodemus story must continue to be shared with future generations to come, not just to inform and educate them, but also to involve them in preservation initiatives. The future outcomes of the Nicodemus NHS are dependent upon their understanding and participation in sustaining the Nicodemus web partnerships and successfully preserving the Nicodemus legacy.

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Appendix A: Summary of Literature Review

Table A1 includes information about the keywords, search criteria, and results of my literature review.

Table A1

Summary of Literature Review

Database	Search Terms: All Peer Reviewed/Full Text	Results	Notes
Business Source Complete	Complex adaptive systems, 2009+	81	Yielded results for general overview of CAS and justification of using CAS for my topic
Education Research Complete: African American Review	Nicodemus Kansas, 2009+	0	
	National Historic Landmark, 2009+	0	
	National Park Service, 2009+	0	
	Township	0	
Education Research Complete: Black Collegian	Nicodemus Kansas, 2009+	0	
	National Park Service, 2009+	0	
	National Historic Site, 2009+	0	
Expanded Academic ASAP Infotrac: Civil War History	Civil war history	4 Journal Issues Available	1989-current available only, A lot of book reviews, impact of the Civil War (general)
Google Scholar	African Americans Post-Reconstruction, Articles, 2009+	151,000	Nothing with all words
	Nicodemus Kansas, Articles, 2009+, exact phrase	37	Good results, but too many books (historical, not current info)
	Nicodemus Kansas, Legal Documents and Articles	1540	More books than articles
	Nicodemus	82	Mainly names of 'people' called Nicodemus, none on the 'town' Nicodemus

Database	Search Terms: All Peer Reviewed/Full Text	Results	Notes
	National Historic Landmark, 2012+	627	good results, also yielded a lot of 'related articles'; some articles will have to be purchased, not available through Walden!
	National Historic Site, 2012+	947	None of the words appeared together in the articles!
	Landmark preservation (all), Complex adaptive systems (exact phrase), 2009+	222	Yielded good results that led to sub-results on connecting CAS with Ethnography!
	Complex adaptive systems, 2009+ (exact)	2,470	
	policy (all), Complex adaptive systems (exact), 2009+	9,200	A lot of results in a broad range, yielded several articles for my topic on network significance
	insider family interviewing ethical, 2009+	32,800	
Lexis Nexis Academic: Berkeley Journal of African-American Law & Policy	Nicodemus Kansas	0	
	National Historic Landmark, 2009+, Law Reviews, Journals, Magazines	84	Nothing relevant to study topic
	National Park Service, 2009+, Law Reviews, Journals, Magazines	0	
	Landmark preservation, 2009+, Law Reviews, Journals, Magazines	4	Not relevant to study topic
	Township, 2009+, Law Reviews, Journals, Magazines	2	Not relevant to study topic
Library of Congress	Nicodemus Kansas	231	Printable copies of legislation, Plethora of printable pictures of the landscape and buildings in Nicodemus, also printable maps of Nicodemus
New Thoreau	National Historic Landmark, 2009+	17	Not a good search engine for this topic
	National Historic Landmark, 2009+	9	

Database	Search Terms: All Peer Reviewed/Full Text	Results	Notes
	Complex adaptive systems, 2009+, English lang., Academic Journals	1016	
Political Science Complete	Complex adaptive systems, 2009+	14	Nothing relevant to my topic!
Political Science Complete: A Sage Full Text Collection	Grounded theory approach, 2009+	746	Specific topics using grounded theory as research method, yielded 1 result for my topic
	Grounded theory research, 2009+	174	Good descriptions on general ethnographic approach, yielded 2 results for my topic
	National Park Service, 2009+	113	Best search yet on NPS! Yielded 4 results for my topic
	Complex adaptive systems, 2009+	243	Did not yield any results for my topic, but did get some references for resourceful books
ProQuest Central	National Historic Landmark, 2009+	14	Small result numbers, but yielded 2 results for my topic
	Complex adaptive systems, 2009+	426	Not a good search, split up words individually, not as an exact phrase
	Ethical research, 2009+	3972	Good results for chapter 3
	Qualitative Sampling	734	Yielded 3 articles useful
	Participant Selection	1415	
ProQuest: Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy	Nicodemus Kansas, 2009+	0	
	National Park Service, 2009+	0	
	National Historic Landmark	0	
	Township	0	
	Preservation	0	
	National Historic Preservation Act	0	

Database	Search Terms: All Peer Reviewed/Full Text	Results	Notes
	National Historic Landmark	11	1998-current available only, no mention of African American landmarks, mostly on metaphoric landmarks within African American culture and society
	National Historic Site	33	1998-current available only, a lot of book reviews, no articles for NHS, mainly on national and historic issues facing African Americans
	Landmark preservation	8	1998-current available only, not relevant to study topic
	Township	13	1998-current available only, no relevant information on African American townships
Science Direct	Complex adaptive systems, 2009+	91,405	A LOT of results, but good database for CAS due to ecology foundations; also good for sub-searches
SocIndex w/ Full Text	Grounded theory, 2009+	524	Many articles on personal experiences with CGT, yielded 1 result for my topic
	Grounded theory approach, 2009+	149	Only information on general grounded theory
	Ethnography, 2009+, Academic Journals	606	Very broad in range of sub-topics, yielded 0 results for my topic
	Ethnographic approach, 2009+	48	Too similar to just 'ethnography'
	National Historic Landmark, 2009+	9	Small result numbers, but Yielded 1 result for my topic

Appendix B: An Excerpt of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Amended)

These first few pages begin with the purpose of the NHPA, including a declaration and promise of preservation (NHPA, 1966, pp. 1-3). Additionally, an emphasis on collaborative partnerships for preservation is stated.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

AS AMENDED

This Act became law on October 15, 1966 (Public Law 89-665, October 15, 1966; 16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). Since enactment, there have been 22 amendments. This description of the Act, as amended, follows the language of the United States Code except that (in common usage) we refer to the "Act" (meaning the Act, as amended) rather than to the "subchapter" or the "title" of the Code. This description also excludes some of the notes found in the Code as well as those sections of the amendments dealing with completed reports.

16 U.S.C. 470,
Short title of the Act,
Congressional finding
and declaration of policy

16 U.S.C. 470(b),
Purpose of the Act

Section 1

(a) This Act may be cited as the "National Historic Preservation Act."

(b) The Congress finds and declares that—

- (1) the spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage;
- (2) the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people;
- (3) historic properties significant to the Nation's heritage are being lost or substantially altered, often inadvertently, with increasing frequency;
- (4) the preservation of this irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans;
- (5) in the face of ever-increasing extensions of urban centers, highways, and residential, commercial, and industrial developments, the present governmental and nongovernmental historic preservation programs and activities are inadequate to insure future generations a genuine opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the rich heritage of our Nation;
- (6) the increased knowledge of our historic resources, the establishment of better means of identifying and administering them, and the encouragement of their preservation will improve the planning and execution of Federal and federally assisted projects and will assist economic growth and development; and

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

16 U.S.C. 470-1,
Declaration of policy of
the Federal Government

(7) although the major burdens of historic preservation have been borne and major efforts initiated by private agencies and individuals, and both should continue to play a vital role, it is nevertheless necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to accelerate its historic preservation programs and activities, to give maximum encouragement to agencies and individuals undertaking preservation by private means, and to assist State and local governments and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States to expand and accelerate their historic preservation programs and activities.

Section 2

It shall be the policy of the Federal Government, in cooperation with other nations and in partnership with the States, local governments, Indian tribes, and private organizations and individuals to—

- (1) use measures, including financial and technical assistance, to foster conditions under which our modern society and our prehistoric and historic resources can exist in productive harmony and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations;
- (2) provide leadership in the preservation of the prehistoric and historic resources of the United States and of the international community of nations and in the administration of the national preservation program in partnership with States, Indian tribes, Native Hawaiians, and local governments;
- (3) administer federally owned, administered, or controlled prehistoric and historic resources in a spirit of stewardship for the inspiration and benefit of present and future generations;
- (4) contribute to the preservation of nonfederally owned prehistoric and historic resources and give maximum encouragement to organizations and individuals undertaking preservation by private means;
- (5) encourage the public and private preservation and utilization of all usable elements of the Nation's historic built environment; and

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

(6) assist State and local governments, Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States to expand and accelerate their historic preservation programs and activities.

Title I, Historic Preservation Programs

Section 101

(a)(1)(A) The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to expand and maintain a National Register of Historic Places composed of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Notwithstanding section 1125(c) of Title 15 [of the U.S. Code], buildings and structures on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (either individually or as part of a historic district), or designated as an individual landmark or as a contributing building in a historic district by a unit of State or local government, may retain the name historically associated with the building or structure.

(B) Properties meeting the criteria for National Historic Landmarks established pursuant to paragraph (2) shall be designated as "National Historic Landmarks" and included on the National Register, subject to the requirements of paragraph (6). All historic properties included on the National Register on December 12, 1980 [the date of enactment of the National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980], shall be deemed to be included on the National Register as of their initial listing for purposes of this Act. All historic properties listed in the Federal Register of February 6, 1979, as "National Historic Landmarks" or thereafter prior to the effective date of this Act are declared by Congress to be National Historic Landmarks of national historic significance as of their initial listing as such in the Federal Register for purposes of this Act and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666) [16 U.S.C. 461 to 467]; except that in cases of National Historic Landmark districts for which no boundaries have been established, boundaries must first be published in the Federal Register.

16 U.S.C. 470a, Historic preservation programs
16 U.S.C. 470a(a), National Register of Historic Places, expansion and maintenance, regulations, etc.

National Historic Landmarks designation

Appendix C: Nicodemus National Historic Site Bill

This legislation begins with the process of introducing the Nicodemus NHS Bill to legislators, followed by the findings and purposes of this preservation policy for Nicodemus. Legislative definitions and the establishment and administration of the Nicodemus NHS are stated. An emphasis on cooperative partnership agreements is also offered. Lastly, rules on property, park management, and authorizing entities are all given. “S.1521, 104th Cong.” (1995-1996).

S 1521 IS

104th CONGRESS

2d Session

S. 1521

To establish the Nicodemus National Historic Site in Kansas, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

January 23, 1996

Mr. DOLE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To establish the Nicodemus National Historic Site in Kansas, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS- Congress finds that--

(1) the town of Nicodemus, in Kansas, has national significance as the only remaining western town established by African-Americans during the Reconstruction period following the Civil War;

(2) the town of Nicodemus is symbolic of the pioneer spirit of African-Americans who dared to leave the only region they had been familiar with to seek personal freedom and the opportunity to develop their talents and capabilities; and

(3) the town of Nicodemus continues to be a viable African-American community.

b) **PURPOSES-** The purposes of this Act are--

(1) to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations, the remaining structures and locations that represent the history (including the settlement and growth) of the town of Nicodemus, Kansas; and

(2) to interpret the historical role of the town of Nicodemus in the Reconstruction period in the context of the experience of westward expansion in the United States.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **HISTORIC SITE-** The term ‘historic site’ means the Nicodemus National Historic Site established by section 3.

(2) **SECRETARY-** The term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT-** There is established the Nicodemus National Historic Site in Nicodemus, Kansas.

(b) **DESCRIPTION-**

(1) **IN GENERAL-** The historic site shall consist of the First Baptist Church, the St. Francis Hotel, the Nicodemus School District Number 1, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Township Hall located within the approximately 161.35 acres designated as the Nicodemus National Landmark in the Township of Nicodemus, Graham County, Kansas, as registered on the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to section 101 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470a), and depicted on a map entitled ‘Nicodemus National Historic Site’, numbered 80,000 and dated August 1994.

(2) MAP AND BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION- The map referred to in paragraph (1) and an accompanying boundary description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Director of the National Park Service and any other office of the National Park Service that the Secretary determines to be an appropriate location for filing the map and boundary description.

SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE HISTORIC SITE.

(a) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall administer the historic site in accordance with--

(1) this Act; and

(2) the provisions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including the Act entitled 'An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes', approved August 25, 1916 (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.), and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666, chapter 593; 16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

(b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS- To further the purposes specified in section 1(b), the Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement with any interested individual, public or private agency, organization, or institution.

(c) TECHNICAL AND PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE-

(1) IN GENERAL- The Secretary may provide to any eligible person described in paragraph (2) technical assistance for the preservation of historic structures of, the maintenance of the cultural landscape of, and local preservation planning for, the historic site.

(2) ELIGIBLE PERSONS- The eligible persons described in this paragraph are--

(A) an owner of real property within the boundary of the historic site, as described in section 3(b); and

(B) any interested individual, agency, organization, or institution that has entered into an agreement with the Secretary pursuant to subsection (b).

SEC. 5. ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.

(a) IN GENERAL- Subject to subsection (b), the Secretary is authorized to acquire by donation, exchange, or purchase with funds made available by donation or appropriation, such lands or interests in lands as may be necessary to allow for the interpretation, preservation, or restoration of the First Baptist Church, the St. Francis Hotel, the Nicodemus School District Number 1, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, or the Township Hall, as described in section 3(b)(1), or any combination thereof.

(b) LIMITATIONS-

(1) ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY OWNED BY THE STATE OF KANSAS- Real property that is owned by the State of Kansas or a political subdivision of the State of Kansas that is acquired pursuant to subsection (a) may only be acquired by donation.

(2) CONSENT OF OWNER REQUIRED- No real property may be acquired under this section without the consent of the owner of the real property.

SEC. 6. GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL- Not later than the last day of the third full fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall, in consultation with the officials described in subsection (b), prepare a general management plan for the historic site.

(b) CONSULTATION- In preparing the general management plan, the Secretary shall consult with an appropriate official of each of the following:

(1) The Nicodemus Historical Society.

(2) The Kansas Historical Society.

(3) Appropriate political subdivisions of the State of Kansas that have jurisdiction over all or a portion of the historic site.

(c) SUBMISSION OF PLAN TO CONGRESS- Upon the completion of the general management plan, the Secretary shall submit a copy of the plan to--

(1) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Interior such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.

Appendix D: Email Consent Form

EMAIL CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of the impact of the National Historic Preservation Act and National Historic Site Designation in Nicodemus, Kansas. The researcher is inviting individuals to be in the study who are age 18+ and affiliated with the Nicodemus NHS, through one of following groups: (a) Nicodemus descendants living in Nicodemus (b) Nicodemus descendants living outside of Nicodemus; (c) non-descendant Nicodemus residents; (d) formal agents and researchers of partnering educational institutions; (e) authorized individuals of associating community organizations; and (f) local, regional, state, or federal workers of the National Park Service and other relevant government agencies associated with Nicodemus. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Ashley Adams, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore the cultural and historical impact of the preservation policy and National Historic Site designation in Nicodemus, Kansas. The data from this study will be used to generate suggestions for preservation policy improvements in Nicodemus. Although Nicodemus will be the primary focus of this study, the goal is to use Nicodemus as a model for other historically marginalized group current and potential NHL locations.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Give your emailed consent to participate in audio recorded interview
- Schedule interview date/time with the researcher (the interview should last about 2 hours)
- Interview via phone or Skype
- Agree to the researcher taking notes and audio recording during the interview

Here are some sample questions:

How has the National Historic Site designation benefited Nicodemus?

What are ways to increase these benefits for Nicodemus?

How has the National Historic Site designation harmed Nicodemus?

What are attempted solutions in addressing these harmful challenges? (If any)

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Your decision will be respected if you choose not to be in the study. If you do decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Description of Anticipated Benefits:

This study will aid the Nicodemus NHS in improving preservation efforts and outcomes. The Nicodemus web currently exists informally, yet this dynamic structure of key agents has the potential to maximize its strength through policy improvements and partnership building. This study will provide a stage for further development of the Nicodemus web. In better perceiving the Nicodemus NHS, other African American historical locations will be given an example for partnership preservation efforts. Finally, the results from this study will promote not only growth within the NHL system, but also shared change within the American society as a whole, as it pertains to the preservation of marginalized group historical locations.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by the researcher, who is the sole transcriber for this data set. Also, other applicable data from this study entails the researcher's interview notes and audio recordings. Protecting the confidentiality of the interview data, I will solely have access to it. Further, this study's data will be stored inside of a locked cabinet (electronic, handwritten, and printed copies). Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone at removed and/or email at removed. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is removed (for US based participants). Walden University's approval number for this study is **06-10-15-0159045** and it expires on **June 9, 2016**.

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By **replying to the email with the words "I Consent"**, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol: The Impact of the National Historic Preservation Act and National Historic Site Designation in Nicodemus, Kansas

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

Contact Info for interviewee:

The purpose of this study is to explore the cultural and historical impact of the preservation policy and National Historic Site designation in Nicodemus, Kansas. The data from this study will be used to generate suggestions for preservation policy improvements in Nicodemus. Although Nicodemus will be the primary focus of this study, the goal is to use Nicodemus as a model for other historically marginalized group current and potential NHL locations.

Questions:

Cultural and Historical

1. How has the National Historic Site designation impacted the culture of Nicodemus?
2. How has the National Historic Site designation impacted the historical legacy of Nicodemus?

NHS Policy Designation

1. How has the National Historic Site designation benefited Nicodemus?
2. What are ways to increase these benefits?
3. How has the National Historic Site designation harmed Nicodemus?

4. What are attempted solutions in addressing these harmful challenges? What were the outcomes of these attempted solutions?

The Nicodemus Web

Nicodemus symbolizes a web of landscape, individuals, and institutional bodies interconnected to a greater shared system of African American history. The landscape of Nicodemus is a part of this web because it serves as a living place that will deteriorate without conservation efforts imposed by preservation policy and other members of the Nicodemus web. Also, the few remaining Nicodemus residents, some of whom, are the descendants of early Nicodemus settlers, are the center of this “Nicodemus web.” These individuals serve as core connections to the town. They maintain relationships with Nicodemus descendants living outside of the area, historical preservation societies, government officials, religious organizations, educational institutions, other historical African American townships, etc. All of these entities are interconnected through the noted web.

1. How have you seen the Nicodemus web work together to improve preservation outcomes in Nicodemus?
2. In what ways can the Nicodemus web be strengthened to improve preservation outcomes?
3. Do you see value in strengthening the web? Why or why not?
4. What are challenges faced by the Nicodemus web? Do you have any suggestions for addressing these challenges?
5. In reflection of these successes and challenges, what are needed resources for the Nicodemus web?

Policy Improvement

1. What are policy improvement recommendations for Nicodemus?
2. Why are these policy improvement suggestions relevant?
3. This concludes our interview session and thank you for participating in this study. Please know that your responses today will be kept confidential and also I may contact you for future interviews.

Appendix F: Nicodemus NHS Letter of Cooperation



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Nicodemus National Historic Site
 510 Washington Ave B1
 Nicodemus, Kansas 67625



November 6, 2014

Ashley Adams

Re: Letter of Cooperation to Conduct Research at Nicodemus National Historic Site

Dear Ashley Adams,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled the Impact of the National Historic Preservation Act and National Historic Site Designation in Nicodemus, Kansas. As part of this study, I authorize you to recruit NPS staff and volunteers, conduct interviews with such individuals associated with the Nicodemus NHS, and confirm NPS staff roles and duties. Upon completion of the dissertation, this researcher will give participants (if desired) and the Nicodemus NHS completed electronic and/or printed copies of this dissertation study. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Assistance with participant recruitment and follow up for unanswered questions. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

The student will be responsible for complying with our site's requirements, including National Park Service research and ethics policies.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

If you have any further questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at removed or at removed.

ANGELA WETZ

Digitally signed by ANGELA WETZ
 DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government,
 ou=Department of the Interior, ou=National
 Park Service, cn=ANGELA WETZ,
 0.9.2342.19200300.100.1.1=14001000562423
 Date: 2014.11.06 10:20:19 -06'00'

Angela Wetz
 Superintendent

Appendix G: Nicodemus Historical Society Letter of Cooperation

Letter of Cooperation

October 21, 2014

Angela Bates
Executive Director
Nicodemus Historic Society
611 S. 5th
Bogue, Kansas 67625

Dear Ashley Adams,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I agree and encourage you to conduct the study entitled the Impact of the National Historic Preservation Act and National Historic Site Designation in Nicodemus, Kansas. As part of this study, I agree and encourage you to recruit NPS staff and volunteers, conduct interviews with such individuals associated with the Nicodemus NHS, and confirm NPS staff roles and duties. Upon completion of the dissertation, this researcher will give participants (if desired), the Nicodemus Historical Society, and the Nicodemus NHS completed electronic and/or printed copies of this dissertation study. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Assistance with participant recruitment. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I agree and encourage this research and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,



Angela Bates,
Executive Director

Appendix H: Field Notes Protocol

*Field Notes Protocol: The Impact of the National Historic Preservation Act and National
Historic Site Designation in Nicodemus, Kansas*

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

Contact Info for interviewee:

These reflective notes will establish the value of data, by the sharing of my own prejudices, beliefs, and previous involvements pertaining to the Nicodemus NHS (NPS, 2016). I will record reflective field notes prior to, during, and after participant interviews. Once the data has been collected and analyzed, I will develop reflective comments to be included in the results discussion. By adhering to these strategies, this research will allow readers to better comprehend my ideas versus the ideas of the participants.

<i>Descriptive Notes</i>	<i>Reflective Notes</i>

Appendix I: U.S. Mail Consent Form

U.S. MAIL CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of the impact of the National Historic Preservation Act and National Historic Site Designation in Nicodemus, Kansas. The researcher is inviting individuals to be in the study who are age 18+ and affiliated with the Nicodemus NHS, through one of following groups: (a) Nicodemus descendants living in Nicodemus (b) Nicodemus descendants living outside of Nicodemus; (c) non-descendant Nicodemus residents; (d) formal agents and researchers of partnering educational institutions; (e) authorized individuals of associating community organizations; and (f) local, regional, state, or federal workers of the National Park Service and other relevant government agencies associated with Nicodemus. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Ashley Adams, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore the cultural and historical impact of the preservation policy and National Historic Site designation in Nicodemus, Kansas. The data from this study will be used to generate suggestions for preservation policy improvements in Nicodemus. Although Nicodemus will be the primary focus of this study, the goal is to use Nicodemus as a model for other historically marginalized group current and potential NHL locations.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Give your signed consent to participate in audio recorded interview
- Schedule interview date/time with the researcher (the interview should last about 2 hours)
- Interview via phone or Skype
- Agree to the researcher taking notes and audio recording during the interview

Here are some sample questions:

How has the National Historic Site designation benefited Nicodemus?

What are ways to increase these benefits for Nicodemus?

How has the National Historic Site designation harmed Nicodemus?

What are attempted solutions in addressing these harmful challenges? (If any)

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Your decision will be respected if you choose not to be in the study. If you do decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Description of Anticipated Benefits:

This study will aid the Nicodemus NHS in improving preservation efforts and outcomes. The Nicodemus web currently exists informally, yet this dynamic structure of key agents has the potential to maximize its strength through policy improvements and partnership building. This study will provide a stage for further development of the Nicodemus web. In better perceiving the Nicodemus NHS, other African American historical locations will be given an example for partnership preservation efforts. Finally, the results from this study will promote not only growth within the NHL system, but also shared change within the American society as a whole, as it pertains to the preservation of marginalized group historical locations.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by the researcher, who is the sole transcriber for this data set. Also, other applicable data from this study entails the researcher's interview notes and audio recordings. Protecting the confidentiality of the interview data, I will solely have access to it. Further, this study's data will be stored inside of a locked cabinet (electronic, handwritten, and printed copies). Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone at removed and/or email at removed. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is removed (for US based participants). Walden University's approval number for this study is **06-10-15-0159045** and it expires on **June 9, 2016**.

Please copy this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Appendix K: Data Results Overview

Adapted from Creswell (2013), I created Table K1 below to display the pertinent thematic categories, participant responses, and broader themes that emerged from the data.

Table K1

Data Results Overview

Thematic categories	Emerging codes	Participant responses & broader themes
Policy designation cultural impact	Descendants	Only a couple of “descendants that actually worked for the park” (Descendant participant 12, 2015)
	Five buildings	Township hall being used by NPS It has “been 20 years and they’re still” (Descendant participant 2, 2015) in township hall
	Hiring	Descendants and locals working for NPS Descendant recruitment issues and NPS struggles to hire descendants Federal hiring policies impact descendant applicant outcomes NPS “can’t specifically target Nicodemus descendants as an applicant pool” (NPS participant 14, 2015)
	Financial	Nicodemus community expected more funds from NPS
	Nicodemus NHS	Nicodemus NHS lacks true NHS park experience
	Visitors	Visitor’s Center display not satisfactory Conflicting opinions on Visitor’s Center Should be “more things for kids to do” (Descendant participant 3, 2015)

(table continues)

Table K1

Data Results Overview (continued)

Thematic categories	Emerging codes	Participant responses & broader themes
Policy designation benefits	African American	National platform for African American experience
	National	“Elevated them to a national level that they have enjoyed” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015)
	History	NHS policy acknowledges historical significance Connects Nicodemus to other historic sites
	Financial	NPS “helped with the funding” (NPS participant 12, 2015) “Funding has diminished over time” (NPS participant 10, 2015)
Policy designation harms	NPS	Nicodemus NHS workers lack “level of excitement” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015) NPS employee transfer policy issues NPS presence “frustrate” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015) community members
	Five buildings	School building facade easement negotiation fell through
	Financial	Mismanagement of money impacted town progress

Table K1

Data Results Overview (continued)

Thematic categories	Emerging codes	Participant responses & broader themes
Nicodemus web descriptive elements	Dwindling population	Nicodemus is “aging community” (NPS participant 11, 2015) Few key individuals working for Nicodemus Nicodemus is a developing “ghost town” (NPS participant 14, 2015)
	Younger generation	“No work for the younger folk around here so their leaving” (Resident non-descendant participant 4, 2015)
	NPS	Monthly programs and annual events engage community Superintendent’s message impacts community
	Nicodemus NHS	Enhanced “visibility of the site” (NPS participant 14, 2015) Lack of park beautification efforts Nicodemus NHS doesn’t look like national park Lack of park signage contributes “problem with the image of Nicodemus” (Descendant participant 1, 2015)
	Partnerships	Educational partnerships are valuable Kansas Black Farmers Association was useful
	Nicodemus web	The Nicodemus Historical Society Township Board, and Buffalo Soldiers Association are core Nicodemus web agents Rouge Nicodemus web agents impact policy outcomes
	Policy	Changing designation to traditional cultural property NHS policy acknowledges historical significance
	National	Timely national platform for African American experience Utilize NPS 100 th and Nicodemus NHS 20 th joint anniversary platform

Table K1

Data Results Overview (continued)

Thematic categories	Emerging codes	Participant responses & broader themes
Nicodemus web role in policy outcomes	Five buildings	NPS easement procedures challenging
	Nicodemus web	More people involved “can only make a stronger web” (NPS participant 11, 2015) Core Nicodemus web agents’ personal intentions matter
	NPS	NPS building trust w/ Nicodemus community landowners don’t trust NPS “Level of distrust (of) people in uniform” (NPS participant 14, 2015)
	Land	NPS must work with land owners
	Landscape	“You can’t separate history from its landscape” (NPS participant 14, 2015)
	Cultural	“There’s some cultural awareness training” for NPS workers (NPS participant 10, 2015) Hiring NPS employees “that is knowledgeable in the field of the African American experience” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015) NPS workers “not culturally savvy” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015)

Table K1

Data Results Overview (continued)

Thematic categories	Emerging codes	Participant responses & broader themes
Nicodemus web needed resources (or current resources not being tapped into)	Descendants	“There are rich descendants in Nicodemus” (NPS participant 13, 2015)
	Partnerships	Partner w/ wealthy descendants Partner w/ nearby dying towns, professional consultants, and local colleges/universities Nearby town businesses are potential Nicodemus web agents Neighboring community partnerships valuable
	Five buildings	Building preservation will “require other parts of the Nicodemus web to take the leadership on that...different descendent groups” (NPS participant 10, 2015) NPS to “actually restore the buildings as was promised” (Descendant participant 2, 2015) “Physical preservation of buildings is all about the money” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015)
	Economy	Retail businesses

Table K1

Data Results Overview (continued)

Thematic categories	Emerging codes	Participant responses & broader themes
Policy designation policy improvement recommendations	Financial	Change federal budget appropriation Partner with credit union
	History	Create new solutions for layered oral history
	Nicodemus NHS	“Do more outreach and reach a greater number of people” (NPS participant 10, 2015) “Presence in the township (hall) was meant to be a temporary solution” (NPS participant 14, 2015) Move NPS out of Township hall Secured NPS office space Permanent key NPS employees
	Community	“We need to have a summit” (Descendant participant 1, 2015) “Create good strategic plan” (NPS participant 14, 2015) Using Native American and NPS partnership models for Nicodemus Community connection lost if NPS moves offsite
	Nicodemus web	Value in strengthening the Nicodemus web Core Nicodemus web agent/organizations collective Communication amongst agents imperative Identify key Nicodemus web leaders
	Technical	“Capture footage of the actual building and make it available electronically”; “Do a lot more stuff electronically, through Facebook or social media, or websites” (NPS participant 10, 2015) Hire “more tech people” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015) Improve “social media and getting the word out” (Community organization participant 9, 2015)
	Policy	“Difference in perception between the key players” and “huge misperception by the broader community of Nicodemus” (NPS participant 13, 2015) Policy not easily understood by community members

Table K1

Data Results Overview (continued)

Thematic categories	Emerging codes	Participant responses & broader themes
Policy designation policy improvement recommendations (continued)	African American	Hire African American NPS workers “Hire an African American professional” (Descendant participant 1, 2015) “Needs to be a consciousness raising” (Educational institution participant 5, 2015)
	Descendants	Descendants varying perceptions of NPS role and Nicodemus NHS policy Acknowledge descendants in front of visitors “Introduce them as descendants...say let me introduce you to a descendant that lives right here” (Descendant participant 1, 2015) Solutions for NPS verifying descendants
	Landscape	NPS doesn’t need to “have a residency there”, “Nicodemus is “a great training site” (Educational institution participant 6, 2015) for NPS Promote and develop Nicodemus Main street
	Hiring	Reserve NPS employee positions for descendants NPS hire descendants and locals Change NPS hiring practices Hire executive director for Nicodemus web
	Nicodemus NHS	Organize targeted tours Finalize plan for Visitor’s Center “just having more things for people to do” (Descendant participant 3, 2015)

Table K1

Data Results Overview (continued)

Thematic categories	Emerging codes	Participant responses & broader themes
Other emerging themes	African American	“a great time in history it’s a great opportunity for us”; “a place where African Americans could create a home for themselves and have autonomy” (Descendant participant 1, 2015)
	NPS	Nicodemus NHS is a part of the national passport system
	Landscape	“fewer people out on the plains than there were 50 years ago” (Community organization participant 9, 2015)

Note. Emerging codes & Participant Nicodemus web sub cohorts

Emerging Codes Key: five buildings, African American, community, cultural, descendants, dwindling population, economy, education, financial, hiring, history, homecoming, land, landscape, national, Native American, NHS, Nicodemus Historical Society, Nicodemus NHS, Nicodemus township, Nicodemus web, NPS, NPS, partnerships, policy, technical, visitors, younger generation

Participant Nicodemus web sub cohorts: (a) participants 1, 2, and 3 were Nicodemus descendants living in or around Nicodemus (b) participant 4 was a non-descendant living in or around Nicodemus; (c) participant 5 and 6 were formal agents and researchers of partnering educational institutions; (d) participant 7, 8, and 9 were authorized individuals of associating community organizations; and (e) participant 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were local, regional, state, or federal workers of the NPS and other relevant government agencies associated with Nicodemus. Nicodemus web sub-cohort titles and participant numbers will be used when quoting or describing specific interview data results.