Native son helps dying town

going as Veryl Switzer had hoped.

The temperature had soared to 105 degrees, and the sun was scorching the silt-like dirt in the 40acre field where he hoped to eventually plant milo. The sprayer he was pulling behind his tractor was leaking anhydrous ammonia, and he was having to stop his tractor every few rounds of the field to check the malfunctioning equip-

Switzer, 73, is one of a handful of farmers left in this all-black community in Graham County, which was designated a National Historic Site in November 1996. He lives in Manhattan during the week and comes to his childhood home on weekends to tend to the crops on his 840-acre farm. Stays are longer during harvest time.

"Five or six families farm now," he said. "There used to be about 30."

In its heyday, Nicodemus was home to 700 people. Today, the census numbers 27, including Switzer's 103-year-old mother,

lured him back to the farming community, where he milked cows and fed chickens as a youngster.

In 1950, after graduating from Bogue High School, Switzer played football at Kansas State University. where he was an All-American in 1951, 1952 and 1953. He then played with the Green Bay Packers. He took a leave from the Packers to serve in the U.S. Air Force, where he played football on its championship team.

After 2 1/2 years in the military, Switzer returned to the Packers and went on to play for the Calgary Stampeders for a year and the Montreal Alouettes for two years before a knee problem sidelined

After a 10-year stint as a teacher and administrator in Chicago, he was hired by K-State and served in a variety of administrative and athletic department positions, including assistant dean of student affairs, assistant vice president of special programs, co-director of the affirmative action program and assistant director of athletics.

He also ran the Earl Woods National Youth Golf Academy before retiring in October 2005.

Over the years, as land became available in the Nicodemus area, Switzer would buy it, knowing the property would increase in value over time. But he shied away from farming — that is, until his mother sold her acreage, bought eight or nine heifers and put them in his pas-

"That's the way she got me involved," he said with a smile. "I've been farming off and on for 30 years. ... My retirement is working

When he was a kid, Switzer said about 135 people lived in the Nicodemus community. Most were descendants of the town's first settlers — black families who sought refuge from the racial oppression of the post-Civil War South.

The migration of black settlers began when the Rev. W.H. Smith, a black minister, W.R. Hill, a white land developer, and five other black men formed the Nicodemus Town Company and began visiting church congregations in Kentucky to encourage people to move to Kansas.

Kansas was a natural draw. After all, it was a free state, part of the Underground Railroad and home to abolitionist John Brown.

"Handbills and flyers distributed by the Nicodemus Town Company portrayed Nicodemus as a place for African Americans to establish black self-government," a brochure distributed by the national historic site states.

Nicodemus was founded in 1877 and had attracted about 300 black settlers by the next spring.

By the mid-1880s, the settlers transformed Nicodemus into a prosperous town. They had two newspapers, three general stores, at least three churches, a number of small hotels, an ice cream parlor, a bank, a livery and numerous homes, the brochure states.

To ensure its growth, the town needed a railroad. But despite the townspeople's efforts, the closest the railroad came was south of the Solomon River; Nicodemus lies north of the river.

So, over time, people moved closer to the Union Pacific railroad camp and eventually established a new town called Bogue. Nicodemus, in the meantime, began

to wane. Nicodemus is a shadow of the bustling town of the 1880s. While rich in history, Nicodemus is poor

in business. As a child — the youngest of six siblings — Switzer remembers a

NICODEMUS (AP) — It wasn't family style restaurant, a gas station, churches, Saturday-night with some Nicodemus residents dances and lots of guests sitting at who had attended. He commented their dinner table after church on

> He was born in his parents' home, keted under its name. which earlier housed the historic St. Francis Hotel. The now-stuccoed building is one of the original structures of the town. In addition to a residence and a hotel/stagecoach station, the building was the town's first post office — the oldest recorded black-operated post office in the United States.

said. "Before that, it was a one-story limestone building.'

In 1952-53, Switzer said, he committed his first year's salary from the Green Bay Packers to renovating the hotel/residence.

said. "It's now a landmark."

The National Historic Site has boosted traffic into the town — last year, 8,600 visitors toured the site and no mill was ever built. and the annual Homecoming It was Switzer's mother who Celebration in late July brings former residents and their families back for a weekend of reminis-

> But Switzer and others want more substantial dollars and investors to roll into the community. That's where their idea for a flour mill comes into play.

Neb., said he became interested in Nicodemus in 1999. Hicks, who grew up in Louisiana, had no fam- case inside the state. ily ties to the town, but had known about its entrepreneurial heritage Nicodemus as being "not innovafor a long time.

Hicks said he traveled to the on a hearing for a lawsuit filed by congressman. The nationwide class-action suit, settled in April 1999, alleged racial discrimination the flour mill is Switzer. This year, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the way it administered its farm programs.

After the hearing, Hicks talked that the town had a unique history and surely a product could be mar-

The flour mill seemed like a natural fit for the Sunflower State.

So, five wheat growers with ties to the community — Switzer, Sharyn Dowdell, Gil Alexander, Wilburt Howard and Rod Bradshaw — joined together to establish Nicodemus Flour Co-op in 2000. Hicks said the Kansas Coop-"The east part of it was brought erative Development Center in in by mules and horses in the 1930s Manhattan and Langston Univerand added to the frame portion," he sity in Oklahoma supported the project in its initial stages and helped secure funding from the USDA.

The organizers named their product Promised Land Flour, and the first batch of flour was ground at a "It's now back into my name," he nearby mill in July 2001. After a while, the co-op began selling Nicodemus Pancake Mix.

But the flour co-op is foundering,

Hicks said the co-op has "pulled back" on the production of flour and is focusing on its pancake mix until it can find a permanent home for a

The pancake mix is now being made at Lehi Roller Mill in Lehi, Utah, and can be ordered at www.nicodemuskansas.com. "I thought by now we would have

Edgar Hicks, a member of the our own mill," Hicks said, admit-Kansas Black Farmers Association ting that he's disheartened by the and a grain consultant from Omaha, lagging progress of the flour co-op. Hicks said the Nicodemus name

the establishment of a flour mill in has "an aura that's bigger than life" outside of Kansas, but that's not the Kansans, he said, typically see

tive or cutting-edge. "The challenge is how to get

nation's capital in the 1990s to sit in people who can benefit from the project to buy into the project," he black farmers against Dan said. "It's about rural development Glickman, then U.S. Secretary of in Graham and Rooks counties. The Agriculture and former Kansas ownership of this project needs to be from the farmers.

One farmer who still has faith in he planted 274 acres of wheat.

"It's significant that his wheat is in the flour," Hicks said.

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SUN	DAY								L	<u>AUG</u>	UST	13	
	6 AM	6:30	7 AM	7:30	8 AM	8:30	9 AM	9:30	10 AM	10:30	11 AM	11:30	
KLBY/ABC 4 6	In Touch (through ad		Good Mor America (rning This Week-George CC) Stephanopoulos						The Coral Ridge Hour (CC)		ed t Church	
KSNK/NBC 8 8	Rebecca Gdn							Paid Program	Your Bible	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	
KBSL/CBS	Paid Messiah Lazy- Program Baptist Town Diego			Go Diego	CBS News Sunday Morning (CC)			Face the Nation			Fantasy F Show	ootball	
K15CG 2	Euro. Journal	Wealth- Track	Jakers!- Winks	Big Big World	Ribert & Robert's	Cyber- chase	Arthur (EI)	Maya & Miguel	Fetch! With	Busi- ness	Health Sense	To the Contrary	
ESPN 28	SportsCer	nter (CC)	SportsCer	nter (CC) Sports- Outside Lines			Sports Reportrs	SportsCenter (Live) (CC)			Basebal Tonight		
USA 37	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	The Dead Vortex (CC						Monk Mr. Goes to th		
TBS 38		ange Coun nedy) <i>Colin</i>				e Bronx ★★ han, Anita N							
WGN 39	Chang- ing	Richard Lee (CC)	Key of David	Paid Program	Feed the Children	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Movie: Life With Mikey ★★½ (1993, Comedy) Michael J. Fox. (CC)				
TNT 40		vie: Set It C ion) Jada P		Movie: Da Drama) Mi	ngerous Michelle Pfeif	linds ★★ (1 fer. (CC)	1995,	Movie: Pay It Forward ★★½ (2000, Drama) A classroom assignment inspires a boy to help others.					
DSC 42	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program				th Wolves Idaho. (CC)		live with	Extreme Engineering (CC)		
A&E (47)	Murder, SI Lone Witne		Breakfast With the Arts (CC)				Growing Up Gotti	Growing Up Gotti	Sim- mons	Sim- mons	King of Cars	Driving Force	
HIST 48	Mountains and Man (CC)		History's Bus	History's Mysteries Cults (CC)				Movie: Saints and Se War) Corbin Allred, La				at (CC)	
NICK 55	Grown Up	OddPar- ents	Jimmy Neutron	Jimmy Neutron	Spon- geBob	Spon- geBob	OddPar- ents	OddPar- ents	The X's (CC)	Danny Phantom	Danny Phantom	Cats- cratch	
DISN (56)	JoJo's Circus	Higgly- town	Little	Ein- steins	Mickey Mouse	Mickey Mouse	Doodle- bops	Doodle- bops	Charlie & Lola	Koala Brothers	Lilo & Stitch	Emperor	
FAM (58)	Digimon- Digital	Star- Racers	Star- Racers	Star- Racers	Star- Racers	Star- Racers	Star- Racers	Star- Racers	Star- Racers	Star- Racers	Full House	Full House	

Movie: A Storm in Summer (2000, Drama) Peter Falk, Andrew McCarthy. (CC) Morning

Naomi's New

SUNDAY

Naomi's New

AUGUST 13

Mass From Notre

Columbo A Deadly State of Mind

	12 PM	12:30	1 PM	1:30	2 PM	2:30	3 PM	3:30	4 PM	4:30	5 PM	5:30	
				onnecticut of Auburn I			acing: Meij . (Live) (CC	Paid Program	ABC News	News (CC)			
			Racing : Ne len, N.Y. (L		Sirius Satel	lite Radio. F	From		lleyball: AVP n Beach Open. (Live)		News	NBC News	
	Mountain Pro Champ		The Seaso Major	on's Final		GA Golf: The International Final Round. From Cast olo. (Live) (CC)					CBS News	News (CC)	
K15CG 2		McLaug- hlin	McLaug- hlin	Religion- Ethics	Classic Go (CC)	ospel	Healthy Body	Doctors on Call	Sewing- Nancy	Beads, Baubles	Ances- tors (CC)	Boom- ers!-Life	
ESPN 28	Little Leag Regional	ue Baseba Teams TB	all: World S A. Williams	eries port, Pa.			all: World S BA. Williams		X Games Calif. (CC)		SportsCenter (Live) (CC)		
	Monk Mr. I the Missing	Monk and Granny	Monk (CC)	Monk Mr. I the Class F		Monk Mr. Private Ey		Monk A fir murder. (C				
	MLB Base Field. (Live		ukee Brewe	ers at Atlant	a Braves. T	Braves. Turner Movie: Orange County **\frac{1}{2} (2002, Comedy) Colin Hanks.					Movie: Bad Boys ★★★ (1995, Action) Martin Lawrence. (CC)		
WGN 39		de Awake : oss, Timoth			MLB Base (Live) (CC)		go Cubs at	Rockies. Co	ors Field.	America's Home Vid	Funniest eos (CC)		
TNT 40		rdball ★ ½ i iane Lane.		na) <i>Keanu</i>	Movie: Drumline ★★★ (2002) Rivalry between two drummers threatens a college band. Nick Cannon.					Movie: Remember the Titans ★★★ (2000, Drama) (CC)			
DSC (42)	MythBuste vaulting ca				2005, Documentary) A profile of late grizzly thy Treadwell. (CC)				Dirty Jobs: Jobs That Bite		Dirty Jobs: Jobs That Bite		
A&E 47					n) Thieves age. (CC)			Find & Design	Design- ing Blind	Big Spender	Sell This House!	Sell This House!	
HIST 48		rica: A Sec lazism in th		The tates. (CC)	Street Gar	ngs: A Sec	ret History	lan: A Sec	cret History (CC)				
		Nick- toons TV	Nick- toons TV	Nick- toons TV	Nick- toons TV	Nick- toons TV	Avatar: The Airbender		Spon- geBob	Told by Ginger	Drake & Josh	Ned's School	
		othless ★★ dentist beco			Zack & Cody	That's- Raven	Lizzie McGuire	Phil of Future	Even Stevens	Natural- Sadie	Life With Derek	Zack & Cody	
				ch ★★ (200 reddie Prinz						Movie: Chasing Liberty ** (2004) Mandy Moore. (CC)			
	(11:00) Columbo	Columbo	A Case of I	mmunity	Movie: Ma Mystery) A		Secret **		Movie: My	stery Won (2005, Mys	nan: Myste	ry Mortin	

SUNDAY

AUGUST 13

	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30	
KLBY/ABC	America's Funniest Home Videos (CC)		Extreme Makeover: Home Edition (CC)		Desperate Housewives (CC)		Grey's Anatomy Straight to the Heart		News (CC)	KAKE Sports	Lawyer on Line	Sports Machine	
KSNK/NBC 8 8	Dateline N	IBC (CC)	NFL Preseason Football: Was Bengals. Paul Brown Stadium. (/ashington Redskins at Cincinnati m. (Live) (CC)			News 24 Day 2: 6:00AM (C			Ebert & Roeper	
KBSL/CBS	60 Minute	s (CC)	Big Brother: All- Stars (N) (CC)				Without a Trace The Road Home		News (CC)	News	Alias A Mi (CC)	ssing Link	
K15CG 2	Bill Moyer Faith & Re		Suckers (C	Nature Bloody Suckers (CC) (DVS) Mystery! Inspector Morse: Sins of the Father (CC) (DVS)						kker New		ystery! (Part 1 of (CC) (DVS)	
ESPN 28	Baseball 1 (Live)	Γonight	MLB Base Dodger Sta	ball : San Fadium. (Live	San Francisco Giants at Los Angeles Dodgers. n. (Live) (CC)					nter (Live) ((CC)	Baseball Tonight	
USA 37	Monk Mr. the Garba		Monk An a in the way.		The 4400	(N) (CC)	The Dead Revelation	Zone is (N) (CC)	House (Co	C)	The 4400 (CC)		
TBS (38)	(4:45) Mo\ Boys ★★★		Seinfeld (CC)	Seinfeld (CC)	Seinfeld (CC)	Seinfeld (CC)	Seinfeld (CC)	Seinfeld (CC)	Movie: Grumpy Old Men of Comedy) Jack Lemmon, W				
WGN (39)	Maximum Exposure		24 Day 4: 1:00AM- 2:00AM (CC)		24 Day 4: 2:00AM- 3:00AM (CC)		WGN News	Instant Replay	Sex and the City	Becker (CC)	Maximum Exposure		
TNT (40)	(4:30) Mov Remembe				Perry. (Prèmiere) (CC)		Movie: The Ron Clar Biography) Matthew F Shark Rebellion		rk Story (2006, Perry. (CC) Science of Shark Sex		Movie: The Ron Clark Story (2006) Shark Attack Survivors		
DSC 42	Perfect Sh Evolution of		Shark Atta Survivors										
A&E (47)	Flip This House Restaurant Special Mega Disasters Potential asteroid.		pecial (CC) ers Countdown to Group		Behind Bars (CC) Ind Zero The events		Intervention Betsy (N) (CC) The Revolution Becoming a Nation		CSI: Miami Game Over (CC) Lost Worlds The Manhattan Project.		Flip This I (CC)	House	
HIST (48)											Countdown to Ground Zero (CC)		
NICK (55)	Romeo! (CC)	Unfabu- lous	Zoey 101 Jet X	Just for Kicks (N)	Full House	Fresh Prince	Hi-Jinks (CC)	Cosby Show	Rose- anne	Rose- anne	Fresh Prince	Fresh Prince	
DISN 56	Hannah Montana	That's- Raven	Viewers' (Choice			Phil of Future	Life With Derek	Zack & Cody	That's- Raven	Hannah Montana	Emperor	
FAM (58)	(4:30) Movie: Three I Chasing Liberty ★★ Milford			ons Over) (CC)			(2003) A carefree inny to an uptight girl.		Three Moons Over Milford (CC)		Joel Osteen	Feed the Children	
HALL	Diagnosis	Murder G	angland (Co	C)	Diagnosis	Murder O	ut of the Pa	st (CC)	Movie: Matlock: The Secret **1/2 (1990, Mystery) Andy Griffith, Ron Taylor. (CC)				

MONDAY

AUGUST 14

		6 PM	6:30	7 P	M	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
Ī	KLBY/ABC 4 6	News (CC)	Enter- tainment	Wife S Hardir		Kraut/	Supernant Family (CC		One Ocean View Trouble in Paradise		News (CC)			mmel Live
	KSNK/NBC 8 8	News	Wheel of Fortune	Psych (CC)				Medium S.O.S. (CC)		News	News The Tonig With Jay I		Late Night	
	KBSL/CBS	News (CC)	Inside Edition	Two/l Men	Half	How I Met	Two/Half Men	Old Christine	CSI: Miam Vengeance		News (CC)	Late Show David Lett		Late Late
	K15CG 2	The News With Jim I		Antiq Road		/ Miami	History De (N) (CC)	etectives	Inside Pas (CC)	sage	BBC World	Monty Charlie Ro Python (CC)		ose (N)
	ESPN 28	Monday N Countdow					ball : Oaklaı Metrodome.		at Minnesof)	ta Vikings.	SportsCer (CC)	nter (Live) Baseball Tonight		NFL Live (Live)
	USA 37	Law & Ord Criminal I		Law 8	& Orc	ler: SVU	WWE Mon	Monday Night Raw (Live) (CC)		Psych Weekend Warriors (CC)		Law & Order: SVU		
Ī	TBS 38	Ray- mond	Ray- mond	Friend (CC)	ds	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	Family Guy (CC)	Family Guy (CC)			Future Part II *** n) <i>Michael J. Fox.</i>	
Ī	WGN 39	America's Funniest Home Videos (CC)		America's Funniest Home Videos (CC)		America's Funniest Home Videos (CC)		WGN News at Nine (CC)		Sex and the City	Becker (CC)	America's Funniest Home Videos (CC)		
Ī	TNT 40	Without a Trace The Source (CC)		Law & Order Can I Get a Witness?		The Closer The Other Woman (CC)		Saved A Shock to the System (N) (CC)		The Closer The Other Woman (CC)		The X-Files Terms of Endearment (CC)		
Ī	DSC 42	American Bill Murray		Amer (CC)	ican	Hot Rod	Biker Buil	d-Off (N)	American Bill Murray		American Wendy's B		` '	
Ī	A&E 47	Crossing Intruded (C		Boun Hunte		Bounty Hunter	Driving Force	Driving Force	Sim- mons	Sim- mons	Flip This I Women vs		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter
Ī	HIST 48	Modern M (CC)	arvels	The N Stairv		le of 3 (N) (CC)	Lost World Germany.		Digging fo Truth (CC)		UFO Files Hunters (C		The Miracle of Stairway B (CC)	
Ī	NICK 55	OddPar- ents	Jimmy Neutron	Spon- geBo		Unfabu- lous	Full House	Fresh Prince	Fresh Prince	Fresh Prince	Fresh Prince	The Fresh Bel-Air (C	Prince of C)	Fresh Prince
Ī	DISN 56	Phil of Future	That's- Raven			n Possible 003, Adven		Natural- Sadie	Natural- Sadie	Ameri- can Drgn	Zack & Cody	That's- Raven	Phil of Future	Kim Possible
Ī	FAM	7th Heave (CC)	n Crazy	Kyle 2 Serve		emory (CC)	Falcon Be Desperado		Whose Uhose Line?		The 700 Club (CC)		Kyle XY Memory Serves (CC)	
Ī	HALL 60	Walker, Te Ranger Bl		Walker, Texas Ranger Deep Cover					nan: Snapshot Martin. (CC)		M*A*S*H (CC)	M*A*S*H (CC)	M*A*S*H (CC)	M*A*S*H (CC)