

# The Nichols Families in America

Leon N. Nichols  
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## FOREWORD

In all ages and among all peoples the family has been the essential factor in society; from the family to the clan, and, finally, the community, which, in its general aspect, is merely a composite family whose interdependence is undeniable. By family we mean the more prominent name groups which are, by special virile characteristics, distinguished among their neighbors as occupying a dominant position in the affairs and councils of the community.

Among such groups, the Nichols family has occupied no mean rank, and the purpose of this publication is to arouse and stimulate the collection of historical material about the various Nichols families in America and their British ancestors. The reasons for doing this are threefold:

First, there have been an unusual number of conspicuous and capable people in America bearing this family name.

Second, there has been so little material published about the various lines that no one knows much of the early relationships. The families that have migrated the least seem to have known most about the relationships, but even this has been very little.

Third, there are certain persistent qualities that show in many branches of the family. This fact has created a desire to know the sources of the power that has been productive of such stability, energy and gentleness as has been notable in the family.

It is intended to show in the future numbers of this publication the early American Nichols lines, their location, their activities, and the relationships to each other. Only a little of this is ready, but the sources of the material are known. It is only necessary to devote a certain amount of intelligent effort in collecting and compiling data to produce results that many would like to have and that the scholar would prize as of definite historical value.

It is intended, also, to show from what localities the first American Nichols settlers emigrated, and not only to trace their geographical wanderings, but also to discover the sources of power in generations of strong men in all parts of the country.

We propose to study the beginnings of the name in Great Britain, connecting there, if possible, the various American lines that have no connection with each other this side of the Atlantic.

This can, in some cases no doubt, be done in the first or second generation back in Great Britain.

It is also our intention to publish genealogical lines of Nichols families down to the living generations so that every Nichols who belongs to a line that is successfully worked out in this way may know what sort of people were his Nichols forbears.

Finally, it will be of much value to give biographical sketches of many of the more notable members of the family.

As for illustrations of portraits, old homes and historic family scenes, that will depend upon the support given to the periodical, both in intellectual and financial ways.

It will also be necessary to have members of the family from all over America send in their line of descent, giving also brothers, sisters, parents, uncles and aunts, grandparents, with dates, homes and occupations so far as known. This will open up a system of correspondence that we cannot take up until we know if there is to be a response on the financial side.

As the editor expects to conduct the research, genealogical correspondence and compilation, he does not desire to act as Treasurer. Mr. E. M. Nichols of Philadelphia has been interested enough in the matter to furnish the funds for this issue, and will gladly receive correspondence in regard to future finances as Treasurer, until more permanent arrangements can be perfected by those of the family who will naturally be most interested.

It is earnestly hoped that those of the family who feel that they can afford it, will take up the matter of finance with the Treasurer at an early date, in order that plans may be made for future work.

It is also necessary to have interest in the work shown in the form of individual subscriptions. We expect the periodical will be a quarterly at two dollars a year. Please say if you will subscribe but do not send money at present, as we only wish to know how much support we are to receive.

LEON NELSON NICHOLS  
of the New York Public Library

*Home address:* 1086 Amsterdam Ave., New York City.

*Business address:* 476 Fifth Avenue.

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## ORIGINS OF THE NICHOLS FAMILY

Interest in the history of a family like ours rests largely upon the fact that centuries of British and American culture have been so thorough in the training of their men and women that a large number of them in each century have been unusually capable factors in its civilization. It is not a new thing to find men of the Nichols name as large factors in the things they have to do, and influential with the men of their generations. When we find a Nichols who knows how to do things unusually well and does them, we are not surprised. The genealogist and ethnologist, though, wonder if those various Nichols men were related and what was the source of their power.

The twentieth and nineteenth centuries had a host of the family who were large factors in British and American civilization. But when we look into the activities of the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries we see the name there in about the same proportional importance. Back in the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries, where biographical data is quite meagre, we still find men by the name of Nichols doing important things in British life. Earlier than this, our researches carry us into the origins of the family and the beginnings of the name Nicol. The most interesting items of Nichols origins were worked out by the editor during 1910-1913, in connection with material found mainly in the New York Public Library. It was surprising that Pym Yeatman, the English genealogist and local historian, did not see what he was doing for Nichols genealogy while he was collecting and examining the immense amount of Norman and early English manuscripts that were digested and incorporated into his two works, *The Feudal History of the County of Derby* (9 vols., 1886-1907), and the large folio volume of the *House of Arundel* (London, 1882). In the latter work he saw the connection for those great political families of England, Albini, Montgomery, Fitzalan, and Howard. But what is equally important was that the very name most often repeated of the earliest ancestors of these great families, was the name that became our family name in two distinct districts of Great Britain.

The name began in the tenth century in Normandy, according

to Yeatman's studies, where we find Nigel or Neel as the lord or Viscount of the Cotentin. The Cotentin is that peninsula on the northern side of France and in Normandy that extends out into the Channel toward the south coast of England. It is now in the Department of the Manche whose largest town is Cherbourg.

In the ninth century this peninsula was ruled by the Viscounts of the Cotentin, who gave allegiance to the Dukes of Normandy. The first of these Viscounts was Richard, an own cousin of Rollo, the first Duke of Normandy. Their grandfather, Euslin Glumru, was one of the great Norse vikings and Jarl of Upland or earl over a large area of eastern Norway. In the days when the Norse were carrying their raids to all the western European shores, and substituting authority and energy for anarchy and degenerate social life, then it was that Rollo made his conquest along the French coast and peopled it with a hardy and energetic race that set a new pace for the development of civilization. Rollo's own cousin, Richard, established himself in possession of the Cotentin and the Channel Islands. Richard's son, Nigel or Neel, succeeded as the second Viscount, and thus began a name that has been familiar in British and American life in the succeeding centuries.

These early Viscounts became Christianized and adopted other phases of the higher culture of France. They gave in turn a greater energy and a clearer vision of the vital things needed in their century. So enthusiastic was their Christianity that the great castle they built near the Douve River was named Saint Sauveur (Holy Saviour). The ruins of this earliest architecture of the family may yet be seen.

The French form of the name was Neel, pronounced as two syllables. The Norman form of Nigel was pronounced with a weak g, like y or ch, as though spelled Neeyell or Nechel, which was easily changed in England to Nichol. Placing a y in Neel we get the transition form Neyel that shows the probable pronunciation of the name of this early Viscount. It is possible that some of the relatives of Nigel I had been in the Norse occupation of Dublin and eastern Ireland, for Neil was one of the Norman-Irish leaders about the time that Rollo had come down upon France. That is one of the theories of the source of the name.

It had been roughly surmised by some of the philologists that the source of the name Nicol was Nicholas, a name that had become popular from Saint Nicholas, the Greek Bishop and later the patron saint of Russia. The Nicholas family of England undoubtedly traces its name to the given name Nicholas; but it is very clear from old English documents that there was never any doubt that the people always understood that Nicholas and Nicol were two different and distinct given names. Out of these have grown the two family names. Ours is historically traceable to French Neel; and also to Norse Njal. There is a mythological pedigree of Viscount Nigel I back in Scandinavia through the Norse sagas, but no form of his name, Nigel, Nicol, Neel, or Njal, appears among his ancestors.

Roger, the son of Nigel I, who succeeded his father as Viscount; named his son and successor Neel or Nigel, and he was the second of the name known to history. Nigel II died in 1045, leaving three sons, Nigel, Richard and Mauger. The oldest became Viscount Nigel III. He had a stormy reign, beginning, as he did, with the leadership of the army that refused to acknowledge William the Bastard as a rightful heir to the Dukedom of Normandy. In the bloody battle of Val-es-Dunes, William had the support of the King of France, and the Cotentin forces were finally routed. Nigel III went into exile for a time, at least, and it is likely that he never came to his power as Viscount again. Duke William lived down his title of Bastard in the greater title of William the Conqueror, won in 1066, when the Battle of Hastings brought him to the throne of a weakening and vacillating England. William was not only a giant in figure, but a remarkable military general and organizer of the newer England. There were at least three sons of Nigel III, Nigel, William and Roger, all of whom bore the appendage of "le Viscount" to their names. It seems, with this profusion of viscounts, without noting of what country they were viscounts, that it was but an empty title given to all the men of the family. It is likely that when Nigel III was exiled, the real viscounty of St. Sauveur was conferred upon Eudes, the son of his brother Richard (called Thurstan Haldrup). Eudes was certainly more than "le Viscount," for he ruled somewhere in Normandy and was of St. Sauveur.

The three sons of Nigel III, Nigel, William and Roger, were

probably of the town of Aubigny or Albini in the Cotentin when they became important friends of Duke William in his English conquests. William, doubtless this second son of Nigel III, was Pincerna to King William, a position of such a personal nature as to bring him into intimate relations with the Conqueror, for the duties of his office seem to have been something of the nature of a royal butler, perhaps the equivalent of Commissary General for the invading army. As William de Albini, the documents of the period show him to have been a very important personage. William de Albini had two sons: Roger d'Ivri, the father of Rualoc of Dol in France; and Nicol de Albini, the hero of the battle of Tinchbray in 1106. Roger de Albini, the third son of Nigel III, is clearly shown by Pym Yeatman's researches to have been the father of the second William de Albini, from whom sprang the great Albini family in England and the Earls of Arundel.

Yeatman passes lightly over the oldest son of Nigel III. However, this notable ancestor, Nicol de Albini, led one wing of the Conqueror's army at the battle of Hastings, and was showered with honors and lands by the Conqueror. The Domesday Book, that census of Norman ownership of lands in England, shows that the Nicols were well rewarded, for they were immense land owners. Nicol de Albini made Cainhoe in Bedfordshire his seat, and was therefore Lord or Baron of Cainhoe. Yeatman failed to note the importance of his discovery that the Nicols de Albini, the Neels "*les Viscounts*," the Viscounts of St. Sauveur or the Cotentin, were identical and were also the Lords of Cainhoe, and as such were the founders of the later families named Nicholl and Nichols.

Later writers have spelled the name of this first Lord of Cainhoe Nicholas d'Albini, but the justification rests only upon the Latinizing of Nicol into Niculus, inserting an h, and changing the de to modern French d'. These changes often seem justified considering the lack of uniformity in spelling in those early centuries. An intelligent study of the names brought Yeatman to the decision that the name was Nicol, not Nicholas, and he was doubtless correct. Yeatman's failure to link the great Nicol de Albini and the Lords of Cainhoe with the later families of Nicholl and Nichols, is accounted for by his absorbing interest in his discoveries regarding the origin of the Albinis.



Nicol de Albini was one of the military leaders to rid England of invaders. In 1074 the Normans and English met a Norse host under a Canute of Norway (not King Canute) and defeated the Norse fleet off Cardiff along the South Wales coast. But Neel de St. Sauveur, our first Lord of Cainhoe, fell at this naval victory. His remains were taken back to Normandy.

The second Lord of Cainhoe was probably the oldest son of the first Lord, and he bore the same name, Nicol de Albini. He, too, had extensive lordships or baronies in England. It was during his possession of them that the Domesday Survey was made in 1086, that showed the wealth of the property of the Lords of Cainhoe. The internal strife in South Wales brought a Norman-English army in 1092 to the assistance of one of the Welsh armies in the civil conflict for the regal supremacy of South Wales. But this time the Normans and their allies were defeated in upper Glamorgan, and the young Lord of Cainhoe was killed.

Among the children of the second Nicol of Cainhoe, there are five sons known: first, the heir to the lordship, another Nicol de Albini; then sons William, Ithel, Henry, and Roger de Mowbray. When Nicol, the third Lord of Cainhoe, died in 1128 or 1129 without issue, the titles went to Robert the son of his brother William. William probably died before Nicol, but if he ever succeeded to Cainhoe, he could not have held it long, as Robert was Lord of Cainhoe soon after Nicol's death. This Robert of Cainhoe founded the Priory of Beaulieu in Hereford, near South Wales. Then followed Robert's son Robert in 1193, and after him, his son Robert who died in infancy, leaving great baronies to be divided among his three sisters, Isabel, Joan, and Asselina. Isabel, wife of William de Hocton, took Cainhoe, Clophill, Ampthill, Melbroke, and some other lands, mainly in Bedfordshire. William de Hocton assumed the name of William de Albini from his wife's possessions. He died about 1264 and their son Simon de Albini inherited all of his parent's manors. He died without issue about 1307, thus ending the Lords of Cainhoe. His sisters disposed of the property, how and to whom, we do not know; but the new owners were without official title or rank presumably. Here, probably, are the unsettled links between these early Nicols and the later Nichols families that flourished in the immediate vicinity in later centuries.

Over a century and a half later are found indefinite references

to a Nicholls family at Ampthill, the nearest possession of Cainhoe, about five miles to the northwest. It seems to have grown in importance during the period of great industrial development in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The most definite thing we know of the Nicholls family in Ampthill during the sixteenth century was that William Nicholls, the Dean of Chester (died 1657) and his two older brothers, Francis (died 1624) and Anthony, were known as of London, and were heirs through their father, Anthony Nicholls of London, to property of their grandfather, Thomas Nicholls of Ampthill. This Thomas Nicholls was the son of Robert Nicholl of London (and perhaps of Ampthill), who died in 1548. Here, then, is a gap of over a century and a half from the death of Simon de Albini, about 1307, to the birth of Robert Nicholl of London. Francis Nicholls of Ampthill, who died in 1624, was the father of four sons, Edward, Francis, William and Richard. The youngest became the famous Colonel Richard Nicolls, the first English Governor chosen after the creation of the Colony of New York, and the representative of the Duke of York. The Governor was not married and it has been supposed that his three brothers died without issue. Attempts have been made to identify the Governor's brother Francis with the Francis Nichols who died at Stratford, Connecticut, in 1650, the ancestor of a large and notable American family. But this conflicts with the statement that Francis, the Governor's brother, voluntarily exiled himself from England because of his royalist sympathies and died in Paris or at the Hague, without issue.

Further away from Cainhoe than Ampthill, but only about forty miles southwest in the adjoining County of Oxford, there lived at Islip in the fifteenth century, a John Nicoll, also called of London. We know his mother's name, Anneis, but not his father's. John Nicoll died in 1478. Eleven years earlier, a John Nicholls, also of London and Islip, died, possibly the father of John who died in 1478. So far, we have no connecting of these Johns with the earlier Nicols at Cainhoe a century before. We know nothing of their ancestry. It looks as though they were descended from the great Nicol de Albinis, but in which generation they broke off from the Lords of Cainhoe, cannot be told, and we are not sure even of that. The prominence of the name Nicol in that whole countryside may have brought out unrelated

boys bearing the given names of Nicol, so that when family names became established in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, some other virile lines, not descendants of the Albinis, may have transformed their oft repeated names of Nicol to the family names of Nichols and Nicoll. Families alter their economic conditions with the changing centuries, but quality is apt to be passed on to some line, even if other lines lose quality. We do not know that any branch from Nicol de Albini degenerated, but we do know that in the senior line at Cainhoe the descent passed to the female issue in two centuries. What the other Nicols were doing in midland England in those centuries is yet to be learned.

Descendants of John Nichols of Islip lived at Willen in Northamptonshire in the following century, the sixteenth. Willen is only about fifteen miles westerly from Cainhoe, and the Lords of Cainhoe held land in East Willen. This would indeed form the link, if it can be shown that the Islip line had been holding East Willen from a younger son of a Nicol de Albini. The line from John Nichols of Islip is traceable for six generations to Matthias Nicoll, the first Secretary of the English Colony of New York and compiler of the Duke's Laws. He died in 1687 and the family became established on Long Island, where they named their place Islip. This family is well known in New York in this generation, being represented by men of unusual ability.

To the east of Cainhoe, probably not over thirty miles away, at Walden in Essex, there lived before 1450, perhaps as early as 1400, John Nichole. He was the ancestor of a Nicholl line traceable over two centuries, and probably ancestors of the East of England line in this century. Here again is only about a century needed to connect with the Lords of Cainhoe, but the links are wanting.

South Wales had had an attraction for the family. The first Lord of Cainhoe lost his life there in the naval battle of 1074, and the second Lord fell in a land battle in 1092. From Ithel (or Iltet) a younger brother of third Nicol of Cainhoe, the South Wales line descended. Ithel and Iltet were both Welsh names. Yeatman uses Ithel; but the burgher lease of Willumus ap Niculus, who died in 1511, has the name Iltet, possibly an error as Iltid has been a common name in the family in South Wales in later times.

Ithel had two sons. One is generally believed to be Geoffrey, the author of *Liber Landavensis*, a history of the Diocese of Llandaff in South Wales, written about 1150. The other son, Gurgan, was chosen about 1108 by the Normans as their first Bishop at Llandaff, succeeding Herewald, the last Welsh Bishop, who had died about four years before. The new Bishop has been known in ecclesiastical history as Bishop Urban. The Welsh Bishops of the period married, as they now do in the Church of England, the Roman practice of celibacy not having been adopted in Wales until later. He must have been quite a young man at the time of his election. In 1121 he began the Cathedral at Llandaff that is a monument to his energy. Though the Cathedral has often been repaired, it is supposed that the Norman arch of the present presbytery was the chancel arch of Urban's Cathedral. He died in 1134.

Five years elapsed before a successor was chosen, and then Uchtryd or Hutredus was elected in 1139. It is probable that he was a relative of Bishop Urban, perhaps on the female side. Bishop Uchtryd died in 1148 and his nephew, Geoffrey of Gulfrid, was chosen Bishop the same year. It has been supposed that Bishop Geoffrey was the son or nephew of Geoffrey, the author of the *Liber Landavensis*, and it is thus likely that he was the nephew of Bishop Urban or Gurgan. Bishop Geoffrey died shortly after his election, not later than 1149.

The Welsh people were demanding that no more Normans be imported as Bishops, but that a Welshman be given the place. In 1149 (or perhaps not until 1153) the election gave the appointment to one born in Wales, but he was Nicol, the son of Bishop Urban or Gurgan, known to the Welsh as Nicol ap Gurgan. A Latinized form of his name, Nicholus, has been changed by later ecclesiastical writers to Nicholas, so that he is now best known as Bishop Nicholas, instead of Bishop Nicol. Although a descendant of the great Nicol de Albini, and belonging to one of the great Norman conquering families, it can be said to the credit of Bishop Nicol that he defended the Welsh of his Diocese in every just cause. For thirty years he contested with the church powers above him to grant rights and privileges to the Welsh people. Bishop Nicol was a mighty power in the twelfth century, so that when he died in 1183 he was highly honored. We do not know the name of his mother nor his wife, but the burgher

lease granted to Bishop Gurgan from Sir John ap William, passed to Bishop Nicol and after him to his son John.

Ownership of Welsh property was usually established by the possessor's tracing his genealogy to the one to whom the land was originally granted. Thus it was that the line of descent from Bishop Nicol for the next eleven generations held the same burgher lease, which probably referred to property at Llantwitt Major in Glamorgan, South Wales. They were John, Nicol, William, Nicol, William, Nicol, Henry, John, Nicol, Thomas, and (eleventh) Henry Nicol, known from other sources to have been living at Llantwitt Major as early as 1465. The use of Nicol as a family name seems to have been begun with him, though the burgher lease names him only as the brother of William ap Thomas. Thomas ap Henry, son of Henry Nicol, succeeded to the lease, then his son John Nicol (Nicol ap Thomas, of the lease), and then his son, the last name on the burgher lease, in 1511, *Iltutus Niculus* (*Iltyd Nicholl*).

The Medieval period in British life ended, as far as the history of the Nichols family of Glamorgan was concerned, with Dr. John Nicholl of Llantwit Major, the Nicol ap Thomas mentioned above, who married Mary, daughter of Thomas Stradling of St. Donat's Castle, and sister of Sir Edward Stradling, one of the leading Welshmen of his day. The family of Stradling had retained prominence throughout the Middle Ages in South Wales, and now, soon after the sixteenth century opened, Sir Edward of St. Donat's finds himself and wife in charge of Iltyd and Robert, the two young sons of his widowed sister. Mary Stradling's husband, Dr. John Nicholl, had died of the plague before 1511. His uncle, William Nicholl, died in that year. The nearest heir to the burgher lease that William had held was the older son of Mary Stradling Nicholl, living in the family of Sir Edward Stradling, in the gloomy and distinguished old castle of St. Donat's on the beetling rocks of the south shore of Wales, overlooking the sea.

This boy, known in the inheritance of the burgher lease as *Iltutus Niculus*, was about ten years of age when his great uncle's inheritance fell to him. It may have been the wealth of the inheritance, or may be the prominence of his maternal family of Stradling of St. Donat's, with their blood of English royalty, but it was more likely the change in the spirit of the new century that brought out an unusual prominence to the Nichols family of

South Wales. The Stradlings, as a great family, faded away with the departure of chivalry and the older medievalism. The new age, one of new discoveries, of new commercial life, and the newer ideas of British education and energy, brought out a newer line of men of adaptive energy. Among these men no one was more ready to seize the cultural opportunities in South Wales than Iltutus Nicolus. Within a century of the birth of Sir Edward Stradling, the Stradlings ceased forever as a family of prominence in Wales. Their qualities of greatness had passed into the female lines of their descendants, and carried on in very different ways than the customs of an age of chivalry.

The four sons of Iltutus Nicolus were John Iltyd, William, Edmund, and Edward. The oldest son was the ancestor of those prominent lines of Nicholl of the Great House (Ty Mawr) at Llantwit Major village, two miles from St. Donat's, from which line have come the landed gentry of Nicholl in Glamorgan, notable among whom are Nicholl of the Ham, resident at the beautiful modern farmland and estates near the meadowed shore, two miles below the village of Llantwit Major.

It is clear, then, that one Nicol family can trace back to the Lords of Cainhoe, the Nicol de Albinis, and the Viscounts of the Cotentin. Midland England families lacked the Welsh process of recording property by genealogical reckoning, and so missed the very data necessary to connect them with their twelfth century ancestors. The scattering of the family of Nicholl of Glamorgan to Cornwall, to Bristol, to London, to New England, to South Carolina, and elsewhere, opens possibilities for the connection of many lines whose ancestry is now unknown.

The tide of migration to America began in the first half of the seventeenth century, notably in the 1630's and 1640's. Before this time there had occurred great cleavages and separations of the family in Great Britain. For many decades, and centuries in some cases, certain Nichols families were established in certain local districts and had become important men in the growth of British civilization in those localities. The changing traits brought about by personal behavior, national powers, emergencies, and the necessities arising from wars, commerce and religion, also brought about decided differences in traits of these various localized Nichols families. When the tide set in for America, it brought to our shores during the seventeenth century some

thirty or more Nichols men whose names have been found. Some of these returned to Europe, others died without male descendants, some lines died out in a few generations, but a few of these immigrants became ancestors of lines that have been productive of men who have been and are now valuable factors in American life. Some of these first American families were of the Welsh line, but others were undoubtedly of Midland or Eastern England or of Cornwall. It will take further researches to establish their connection.

Only one line in America is now surely known to be connected with the Glamorgan line, and this through the fourth son of Iltutus Nicolus. The present Nicholl landed gentry of Wales sprang from the eldest son, but the fourth son, Edward Nicholls, living in 1568, was of Eglwys Brewis and engaged in maritime shipping from Aberthaw and other South Wales ports, and also from Bristol, England. His son, Iltid Nicholls, and grandson, Edmund Nicholls, continued the occupation. This Edmund had a son Edmund by his first wife, and two sons, Thomas and John Philip, by his second wife.

The drifting sands of the centuries had ruined all South Wales harbors except Cardiff, but this did not result in any degeneration on the part of the brothers. Edmund and Thomas fought in Prince Rupert's Cavalier army, probably under Colonel John Washington, when Bristol fell to Cromwell in 1645; and early in the second half of the seventeenth century they sailed in their own vessels, the Landwit and the Landoff, for a new home in the new world at Newport, in the newly settled Rhode Island. What became of John Philip Nichols, the third son, we do not know. He and his son Thomas are supposed to have gone to Virginia or the West Indies. Edmund, the eldest son, died at Newport, leaving no son.

Thomas, the second son, founded the Nichols families of Rhode Island. The facts of his life are meagre. He left six sons: Thomas, b. 1660, John, b. 1666, Robert, b. 1671, Benjamin, b. 1676, Jonathan, b. 1681, and Joseph b. 1684. All but the last of these left sons.

In the settlement of the grants of land to those who had suffered in the "King Philip" war, Thomas Nichols was one of the grantees of a large tract on the west side of Narragansett Bay. Three of his sons, Thomas, John, and Benjamin, went

over the bay to the new land, while the other three stayed with their father and uncle Edmund at Newport.

Thomas 2nd, who lived at East Greenwich, left two sons, James, b. 1693, and Thomas, b. 1702. James left four sons whose descendants moved to Van Buren, N. Y., early in the nineteenth century. Thomas 3rd died in 1825, leaving one child, Thomas 4th, b. 1725 or 6, and he had three sons, Anthony, Charles and James.

John Nichols, second son of Thomas the founder, had four sons: John, b. 1689, Thomas, b. 1691, Robert, b. 1699, and Joseph, b. 1705. Of these three sons, John lived in Coventry, R. I. Joseph, the youngest, had four sons, and they lived at East Greenwich; this family seems to be the source of other Vermont and New York state lines that probably left Rhode Island soon after the settlement of Danby, Vt.

Captain Benjamin Nichols, the fourth son of our founder, lived in the town of North Kingstown, but almost in the village of East Greenwich. He maintained the shipping business, at least keeping the two ships that his father and uncle had used in the South Wales and English trade. The connections of many of the colonial Nichols men with the shipping trade is one of the romances of the history of the family, so interesting that it should not be allowed to fade from memory. Capt. Benjamin had a large family. His second son Jonathan, b. 1700, removed to Newport. His other sons left considerable families. Many of these descendants went to New York State, and this includes the descendants of William Nichols of West Greenwich, member of the Rhode Island Legislature before and after the Revolution.

Jonathan, the fifth son of Thomas the founder, lived at Newport as one of its most prominent men. He held many public offices, and was chosen Deputy Governor in 1727. His son Jonathan became prominent also and was Deputy Governor in 1756. He lived in the same family mansion, which is still standing in the older part of Newport. From his son Jonathan has descended a Quaker line of Nichols, one of which, Othniel Foster Nichols, was construction engineer of the Williamsburg Bridge in New York City. Robert, the second son, b. 1715, probably lived in East Greenwich and had four sons, but their names disappeared from Rhode Island records, and probably matches the story of a "Nichols and four sons who left for England early in the Revolution."



During and after the Revolution, the family which for over one hundred years had confined itself to Rhode Island began to migrate, mostly to Vermont and New York, and in later years scattering throughout the Northwest. Mase Nichols, a descendant of Captain Benjamin, and great-grandfather of the editor, settled in Fairfield, Herkimer County, New York. Anthony Nichols, a descendant of Thomas Nichols, Jr., settled in Danby, Vermont. Ebenezer Nichols of the same line settled in Danby also, later going to Western New York and to La Porte, Indiana, where he was a pioneer. He was the great-grandfather of E. M. Nichols.

One of the large Nichols families is that descended from Francis Nichols of Stratford, Connecticut. He died in 1650, leaving three sons, Isaac of Stratford, Caleb of Woodbury, and John of Watertown. These sons left respectively five, six and three sons, who became important factors in Connecticut life about the close of the seventeenth century. This family has made some influential migrations from Connecticut, notably to New Jersey, and has cut a large figure in the life of some other states. That Francis Nichols of Stratford was the son of Francis of Amptill, England, and therefore nephew of Governor Richard Nicolls, has been often asserted, but the proofs are unsatisfactory.

Another of the large American Nichols families is that descended from Thomas Nichols of Amesbury, Massachusetts, who died in 1703, leaving three sons, Thomas, Samuel, and John. This line has produced a great many men of strong character. There have been surmises that this family was connected either with the family of Glamorgan or that of Amptill, but nothing has been proven. The data favorable to the connection with the Glamorgan line seems to be in a relationship of Thomas with David Nichols of Boston, son of David of Cowbridge, in South Wales.

A second family in Rhode Island was descended from Richard Nichols, who died about 1720 and whose four sons lived at and near Coventry, Rhode Island. This line has been small, and is, perhaps, extinct in the male line.

Another Richard Nichols of Ipswich, Massachusetts, who died in 1674, was the founder of a line that has been of uniformly high character, and has increased in prominence during the nineteenth century. Two branches went to Newport, Rhode Island, in the early part of the eighteenth century, and held nearly as

important a place in the colony as the older line of Thomas of Newport.

The line of Alexander Nichols or Nickels of Boston and later of Sheepscott, Maine, has produced many men of quality in Northern New England.

James Nichols of Malden, Massachusetts, in the eighteenth century, left four sons, James, Nathaniel, Samuel and Caleb who were ancestors of some important local families of Eastern Massachusetts.

Other lines in New England with whose descendants the editor has not yet become familiar are those of Adam of New Haven, William of Danvers, Thomas of Hingham, Randall of Charlestown, David of Boston, Allen of Barnstable, and Cyprian of Hartford. These are small families. Some of them, perhaps all, became extinct before the twentieth century.

In Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century, Julius and William Nichols founded families that are living in the Central West.

Dr. John Nicoll of New York came from Scotland early in the eighteenth century and established a small Hudson Valley family of local distinction.

In the South were many Nichols men who settled there in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but few of them have a large number of descendants. From the family in South Wales there were four or five missionaries who came out from the Church of England. Some of them went to the Carolinas, and probably one went to Maryland. Just what is the line of connection between them and the famous anti-lottery Governor, Judge and General in Louisiana is not known, but it would probably be possible to work out that line. Various substantial Nichols families of the Carolinas are doubtless from the same stock.

In the West Indies there were early Nichols settlers, some of them men of importance in those colonies. Jamaica and Bermuda had the most notable Nichols names, but we do not know if those lines have continued into this century.

There are, no doubt, important American lines not mentioned here. Systematic work will bring out families not now apparent, and will undoubtedly solve many of the problems of ancestry which many of the family wish to know.