



The Search for Minnie Nichols' Ancestors



Minnie B. Nichols first appears on our radar screen when she is married to Stephen Milton "SM" Rector in Milo, Yates County, NY on August 5, 1888. She was born on November 29, 1872 so she was about 4 months shy of being 16 years old when she was married. The Milo Town Clerk records for her marriage entry show that she was born in Rhode Island, her father was Thomas Nichols, she was from Second Milo, and the Pastor was F. Shirer. The entry for the birth of her firstborn, Mary Florence, on July 9, 1889 shows that her maiden name was Minnie Rector and her birthplace was "don't know." When

Minnie's son Arthur was born in 1892 the birth record say her place of birth was Brooklyn.

Minnie's death certificate says she was born in Kansas. The lines for parents and their birthplaces were filled in with "cannot be learned." The information was given by her daughter Mrs. Howard Swarthout of Buffalo.

Minnie shows up on the 1892 census in Milo, age 21. Stephen M Rector was 39 and they lived with his mother, three children by Minnie and two from his first marriage to Jennie D. Hawley. In the same household was a young man named George Nichols, age 22. He may have been Minnie's brother, but there were so many Nichols in the neighborhood (including another Minnie) that this certainly is not yet proven. There was a Minnie



Nichols, the daughter of Loring and Charlotte Nichols, living in Nichols Corners, Milo, NY in 1870. The 1870 census lists her as being 13 years old; this Minnie, then, was born in 1857. A little too old to be our Minnie.

Minnie told her daughter, Mary Florence Rector Bullock, that she came from Missouri. Frank Swarthout says that Minnie told his mother, Minnie's other daughter, Helen Egeria Rector Swarthout, that she came from Kansas with the McGilliards. Her birthplace and the identity of her father and mother remain a mystery to this day.

Several attempts have been made to learn more about Minnie's past. The Yates County Historian, Frances Dumas, has been very helpful in tracking down information on Minnie. One such attempt was to put known information about Minnie on the "Nichols' Forum" website on the internet. One response from W. Earle Nichols has lead to some interesting speculation. The story follows.



Minerva "Minnie" Nichols in Missouri in the 1870s and 1880s

Information from:

Wm. Earl Nichols (Born in Idaho in 1928)

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The story goes that James Nichols, Missouri Minnie's father, came from a foundling home in Ireland. He stowed away on a ship to America at age 9. He stayed on the ship as a cabin boy for a few years before he started work on a cargo ship on the Mississippi River.

The oldest record of James is from an 1856 Iowa State Census of Henry Co., Tippecanoe Township. He was married to Mary Hobson and they had 4 children at the time. Mary and James had 10 children total before Mary died in 1871. The children were:

1. Elias - b. 1847 - moved to Vernon Co., MO and married P. Graham
2. Laura Ann - b. 1850 - married Edward Ralls (Rawls) and lived in Mercer Co., in 1880
3. Virginia - b. 1853 - in 1880 was still living at home at age 27.
4. Sarah (Sally) - b. 1855
5. Martha - b. 1857
6. John C. F. - b. 1860
7. Curtis - b. 1863
8. Emma - b. 1864
9. Clara - b. 1867
10. Catherine (Katie) - b. 1869 - married Cornelius (Neal?) A. Baldwin (son of Lucinda Cooper Baldwin who later married Catherine's father)

After Mary died, James Nichols married Lucinda Cooper Baldwin on 25 Mar 1873. Lucinda already had 5 children with James S. Baldwin. These 5 Baldwin children were Marion, Oliver, Elmira, Cornelius, and Louise. James and Lucinda Nichols had the following children:

1. Minnie Nichols - born about 1874
2. Arthur Lee Nichols - born 12 Oct 1877 - married Lucy Ethel Kidwell
3. Thomas Nichols - born 30 Nov 1879 - married Clara Kidwell
4. Eldred Taylor "Sly" Nichols - born 8 Apr 1882 - married Virginia "Jennie" Kidwell
5. Fred Nichols - born 20 Jun 1886

The 1880 Federal Census of Medicine Township, Mercer Co., MO lists James, Lucinda, Minnie, Arthur and Thomas. Minnie is listed as being 6 years old on June 1, 1880. Claudia Swanson (Arthur Lee Nichols' daughter and Earl Nichols' aunt) said that Minnie's given name was Minerva and that she died at an early age. No record of her birth, death or burial place has been found.

The James and Lucinda Nichols family moved from Mercer Co., MO to Rich Hill, Vernon Co., MO sometime in the 1880s. That part of Vernon Co., MO is now in Bates Co., MO. They moved there to work in the coal mines. It is not known whether Minnie (Minerva) moved with the family.

James Nichols died in Ossage, Vernon Co., MO on 9 Jan 1894. Arthur Lee, Thomas, and Eldred Taylor Nichols and their families all moved to the Boise Valley, Idaho in the early 1900s.

Miscellaneous Comments by Earl Nichols

1. The name McGilliard does not ring a bell
2. I am not aware of any of the family moving to Kansas
3. The Nichols' house in Medicine Twp., Mercer Co., MO in the 1870s was not very large and the five Baldwin children were "farmed out" to Cooper relatives and neighbors. Some of the Baldwin children are listed as servants in those households on the 1880 Census. It is possible that Minnie (Minerva) may have been raised by one of the Baldwin girls in the family.
4. There has been a family story that has filtered down about a couple of the children (Baldwin or Nichols?) went to New York and were involved in the stage production of "Abie's Irish Rose." The story has not been authenticated.
5. My Minerva may have been born in Mercer Co., MO or in Vernon Co., MO.

Excerpts from a Mercer County, MO History

JAMES S. AND LUCINDA (COOPER) BALDWIN

James S. Baldwin was born ca 1836 in Illinois and died September 21, 1870, of hemorrhage of the lungs (contracted while a prisoner in 1862 in Montgomery, Alabama). James was married by George Odneal, JP, on June 28, 1857, in Mercer County, Missouri, to Lucinda Cooper. She was born April 8, 1841, in Indiana and died in February 1905 in Vernon County, Missouri. She was the daughter of Starling and Lucinda (Callicott) Cooper (see Starling Cooper Jr. history).

James enlisted in the Civil War in Mercer County on October 18, 1861, as a private in Co. G, 23rd MO Vol. He was honorably discharged on January 24, 1865.

Lucinda is said to have been short, somewhat feisty, with a dark complexion, and it is also said that she spoke Gaelic.

James and Lucinda had five children, all of whom were born near Half Rock, Medicine Township, Mercer County, Missouri:

- 1) Marion A. was born September 6, 1858, and married first Lucinda Ellen Ganiott (see John William Garriott history); he married second Maggie . M. A. died in 1903 in Oregon. M. A. and Lucinda's children were Lloyd (August 17, 1883 -), Roy Alvin (January 2, 1885 -), Walter and Alma (they died young and are buried in the Barnes Cemetery). His children by Maggie were Virgil and Orville.
- 2) Oliver Franklin "Frank" was born November 1, 1859, and married Melda J. Lowry. Three of their children were Gracie, Amber L. and Roy A. Roy died on June 25, 1903, at age 17 years, two months and five days and is buried in the Harris Cemetery.
- 3) Elmira was born July 18, 1861, and married Moses Snyder Voils. They are found in the 1900 Sheridan, Wyoming, census. They had nine children with six living at the time of the census. Those listed are Minnie Mabel (December 1883). Alva D. (June 1884), James (August 1890), Dora L. (January 1892), Wesley (November 1893). Two of their infant children are buried in the Half Rock Cemetery.
- 4) Cornelius "Neil" A. was born January 26, 1866, and married Kate Nichols.

- 5) Louisa was born November 26 1868, and is on the 1880 Medicine Township, Mercer County, census as age 13 and living with Shadrack and Rebecca (Stanton) Cooper (no further information).

JAMES AND LUCINDA (COOPER) BALDWIN NICHOLS

James Arthur Nichols was born ca 1825 in Missouri and died January 9, 1894. He was married on June 12, 1845. to Mary Hobson. She died July 14 , 1871. James was then married by Rev. James Voils on March 2, 1873, in Princeton, Mercer County, Missouri, to Mrs. Lucinda (Cooper) Baldwin.

James enlisted on September 10, 1861, as a first lieutenant in Co. A, 7th Reg't., MO State Militia, in the Civil War at Wintersville, Sullivan County, Missouri. He served in Jonas Clark's Mercer County Battalion and was honorably discharged on March 12, 1862.

James and Lucinda had five children, all of whom were born near Half Rock:

- 6) Minerva "Minnie" was born ca 1874 (no further information).
- 7) Arthur Lee was born October 12, 1877, in Vernon County, Missouri, was married first on February 20, 1897, to Lucy Ethel Kidwell and was married second to Nancy A. (Faucett) Rutledge. Arthur died in Meridian, Idaho.
- 8) Thomas was born November 30, 1879, and died in September 1936. He married March 4, 1900, to Clara Charlotte Kidwell. She was born March 20, 1876, and died April 7, 1912.
- 9) Eldred "Sly" Taylor was born April 8, 1882.
- 10) Fred was born June 20, 1886, and married Mary Virginia Kidwell.

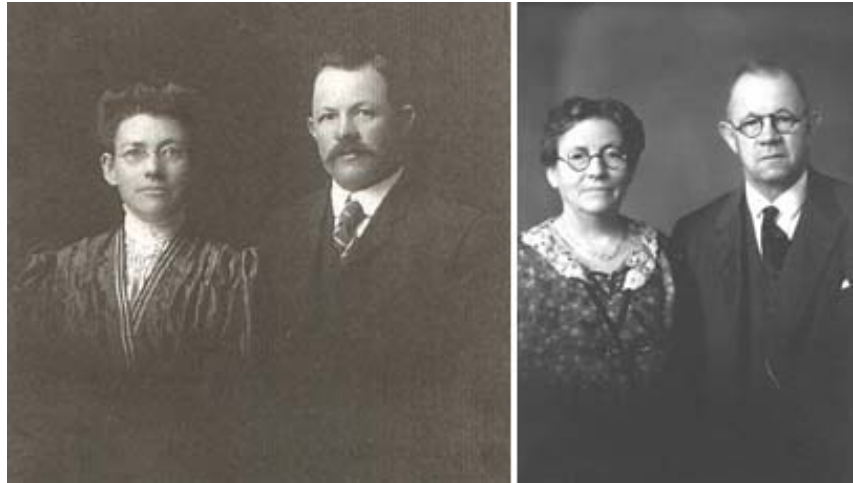
Submitted by William E. Nichols and Randalin (Black) Ferguson

Minnie B. Nichols in Yates Co., NY from 1888 Through 1938

1. Minnie Nichols married Stephen Milton Rector in Milo Twp., Yates Co., NY on 5 Aug 1888. The Milo Town Clerk marriage record shows that she was age 17, Thomas Nichols was her father, she was from Second Milo, Yates, Co., NY, and she was born in Rhode Island.
2. Mary Florence Rector was born on 9 Jul 1889. The Milo Town Clerk birth record shows that her father was S. M. Rector aged 39, her mother was Minnie Rector aged 20, her mother's maiden name was Minnie Rector, and her mother's birthplace was "don't know."
3. Minnie and S. M. Rector had four children.
 - a) Mary Florence Rector - b. 1889
 - b) Thomas Jefferson Rector - b. 1890
 - c) Helen Egeria Rector - b. 1891
 - d) Arthur Frederick Rector - b. 1892
4. When Minnie's son Arthur was born in 1892 the birth record say her place of birth was Brooklyn.

5. Minnie's death certificate says she was born in Kansas. The lines for parents and their birthplaces were filled in with "cannot be learned." The information was given by Mrs Howard Swarhout of Buffalo.
6. Minnie shows up on the 1892 census in Milo, age 21. Stephen M Rector was 39 and they lived with his mother, three children by Minnie and two from his first marriage to Jennie. In the same household was a young man named George Nichols, age 22.
7. Mary Florence Rector Bullock told her children that her mother, Minnie, came from Missouri. Frank Swarhout, Minnie's grandson, was told that Minnie came from Kansas with the McGilliard family.

8. Minnie was very close to Carrie McGilliard Razy and Frances Harmon Townsend McGilliard. Minnie's daughter, Mary, always called Carrie Razy, "Aunt Carrie." Minnie and S. M. Rector held a party to honor Earle and Frances McGilliard after their wedding in 1905. Earle was her second husband; nothing is known of her first husband, Mr.



Two portraits of Frances and Earle McGilliard

Mr. Townsend. However, the Yates County surrogate court records yield a petition on the part of Frances S. Townsend of Milo for the possessions of her late husband, Alvah E. Townsend of Milo; Alvah died 27 May 1900. Frances Harmon was born in 1868 in Northumberland Co., PA and died at 100 in 1968 in Lakeland, FL. Her father was P. H. Harmon and her mother Mary Carey. Minnie Nichols Rector's obituary in 1938 states that Minnie was survived by her sister Mrs. Frances McGilliard of Lakeland, FL.

Could the Missouri Minnie be the Yates Minnie?

1. The naming pattern of her children gives some credibility to the hypothesis. Our Minnie used three of the six names of Missouri Minnie's brothers in the four names of her sons,

Four Brother's Names

Arthur Lee
Thomas
Eldred Taylor
Fred

Two Son's Names

Thomas Jefferson
Arthur Frederick

Naming patterns are often used by genealogists as clues for determining family relationships.

2. Could it be that, in addition to our Minnie Nichols being the Missouri Minnie, Frances Harmon is Louisa Baldwin, her half-sister. Frances was born in 1868, the same year that the youngest Baldwin girl, Louisa, was born. William Earl Nichols stated that, based on the 1880 census, Louisa was living with Cooper relatives in Mercer Co., MO and listed as a servant. There is no record of Louisa after the 1880 census. Cleveland's 1873 Yates History states that Robert Preston McGilliard, his wife Charlotte Green McGilliard, and their son, Earle Durward McGilliard were living in Saxon, Henry Co., IL at the time the history was written. Charlotte's brother, Champion, and his wife also lived in Illinois. Other Green families and Robson families also lived in IL and subsequently moved on to locations in MO, IA, and KS. In 1873 the Nichols/Baldwin/Cooper families were in Half Rock, Mercer Co., MO; a little more than 100 miles from Henry Co., IL. Although the McGilliards returned to Yates county (the 1875 state census lists the family, including Carrie, as living in Italy, NY) they could have maintained a relationship with the Nichols/Baldwin/ Cooper families out west. The middle initial, in Minnie B. Nichols, could stand for Baldwin. Possibly Minnie went to live, as a servant, with the same Cooper family in Half Rock, MO where Louisa Baldwin lived.
3. There is no real evidence, other than her children's interpretation of Minnie's own words, to support the fact that she came from Missouri or Kansas to Yates County sometime before 1888. Although there is no cemetery record or other official record of her death, the Missouri Nichol's descendants have always believed that she died young in Missouri.

Is Missouri Minnie the same person as Minnie B. Nichols Rector? Maybe. Efforts are continuing to get more information on Minnie B. Nichols Rector's background.

*Paul D. Bullock
November 1999*