

OUR NICHOLAS FAMILY

The first proof of our Nicholas Family in the United States can be found in the National Archives in the records of the Revolutionary War pensioners. (National Archives, Record Group M-804, Roll #1816.)

Our Revolutionary War pensioner was WILLIAM NICHOLAS and he applied for his pension under the Revolutionary Claim Act of June 7, 1832. He began his request for pension in October 17, 1832, in the State of Ohio, Columbiana County, in the court of Common Pleas and his Certificate of Pension of \$46.00 per year commenced on the 4th day of March 1834, with arrears pay received from the 4th of September 1832. (Recorded in Book D, Page 42)

His pension papers were filed to Ohio through the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Agency # 5419. "William Nicholas of Columbiana County in the State of Ohio who was a private in the Company commanded by Captain Jarvis of the Regiment commanded by Col McIlvane in the Pennsylvania Militia for 14 months from 1776."

In the pension file are William's original affidavit and a document identified as "Questions by the Court." The first question being: "Where and in what year were you born?" and William's answer was in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. I think in the year 1758. Second question: "Have you any record of your age?" Answer "No, I believe that the family record kept by my father was lost at the time the British took Philadelphia." Third question: "Where were you living when called into service--where have you lived since the revolutionary war--where do you now live?" Answer: "In Bensalem Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, from thence I moved to Lycoming County on the west branch of the Susquehanna and from thence I moved to Columbiana County, Ohio where I now live." He also stated that sometime in the summer of 1776 he first entered the service of the United States as a volunteer. The whole company being called upon to volunteer, as near as he can recollect on the first of July of said year."

As a result of this pension record, we know then that William was born in 1758 in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and that his parents were living in Bucks County in 1758 nearly twenty years before the Revolutionary War. One would like to think with this much information it should have been relatively easy to discover who were his parents, but I have not been able to find any civil or church records to discover their names.

After William died 6 November 1842, in Columbiana County, Ohio, his widow Hannah Nicholas, in October of 1843, applied for a Widow's Pension, under an act granting half pay and pensions to certain widow's passed July 7, 1838. She states that, "She has no Marriage License but that she was

married to William Nicholas in June or July 1788, that she was not married to him prior to his leaving for the service but that the marriage took place previous to the first of January 1794." This was apparently one of the provisions for pension.

Hannah must have had some problem because there follows in the file a series of letters including finally two pages from her family Bible, copyright date of 1812, which were mailed as proof of her marriage, plus the affidavits from long time friends and from Holmes F. Nicholas, a son and our more immediate ancestor, that William was his father and Hannah his mother. With a regular series of letters written through 1846, she continued to be denied any pension. For some reason the records of William's pension were temporarily lost possibly because they were from a Pittsburgh Military office rather than Ohio. Finally a Certificate of Pension was issued to her the 2nd day of May 1849.

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In a letter regarding her request for pension she stated that she had ten children, the oldest being born in March, 1789, and that five are living and the names of all the children were written in her family Bible by her husband. These pension pages are copied here and show that our Holmes F. Nicholas, whose affidavit was included is listed as the ninth of ten children. Family tradition says that it was Holmes' persistence that enabled his mother to get her pension. It is recorded on Roll of Pensioners, February 2, 1848, Page 356, Vol. 4.

Her death was reported 14 May 1861, but we are not sure that she did not die sometime earlier. However, her grand daughter Eliza Ann Nicholas (married to Jacob Martin) remembered that she spent time with her parents Holmes and Sarah. Eliza was born 16 March 1841 and would have had to be more than an infant to remember this and too, Sarah died in 1855. It was Eliza Ann's daughter Sarah Martin Packard who said that Hannah was called by her grandchildren "Annie" and that her maiden name was PARSONS. I do not know where Annie is buried. And, I have always felt that Holmes might be a family surname but I cannot not prove it.

"Holmes" appears in several generations. Holmes F., my great-grandfather, had a nephew Holmes and this Holmes had cousins who had Holmes as a middle name. In my father's generation, his Aunt Lilly Nicholas Peters used both Holmes and Nicholas for two of her son's middle names. In my generation (Marlene Nicholas Plambeck), Holmes is not used, but Nicholas is the middle name of my cousin Bruce Nicholas McQuistan. And our grandson is Nicholas Gilbert Braun. (Gilbert is his other Grandma Braun's maiden name.)

By 1990 I had found three of Hannah's "Annie" surviving children-three sons. William born in 1793, Cornelius born in 1803, and Holmes F. born in 1812. Perhaps the others were daughters who married and are therefore lost to me. I have

followed the descendants of William II and Holmes F. to Iowa. I think Cornelius married an Isabel Wiley in Columbiana County, Ohio, in 1833, and after he sold his Ohio land in 1836, I have lost him. In truth, I have not looked very diligently for him. There are probably some other Nicholas cousins somewhere.

I have a copy of an old letter written in 1859 and signed Rachel McBride. Is she Rachel b. 1803 and one of the one of the surviving daughters? I have not been able to find her in any public records. She was then in Hooperville, Iowa, and Wilson Nicholas, son of Holmes and Sarah Keith Nicholas has been staying with them. She mentions a Smith and an Aley, an infant. I had some contact with descendants of Wilson in the early 1980's but their information was about just their own families. Wilson Nicholas died young at age 42 of severe lung problems, probably tuberculosis his family thought, acquired during his service in the Civil War. He may have been a teacher in Sterling, Whiteside Co., Illinois. I have two letters he wrote home to his sister Eliza Ann. One written that summer he was with Rachel and the other written to her during his service with Co. B of the 22nd Iowa Infantry. He was then at Savannah, Georgia, near the end of the Civil War.

Holmes Nicholas and children of his brother William born in 1793 left Ohio in or around 1855, moving to Iowa. There are land transactions involving our old Nicholas family in Columbiana County, Ohio, dating from 1826 to 1872. One of the children of Oliver PERRY Nicholas, son of William II, stayed in Hanoverton, Ohio, his daughter Grace. Perry died young of the bloody flux. Grace Nicholas continued to live in the Spread Eagle Tavern that her father purchased in 1849 until her death in 1933. By 1990 this tavern is registered as one of Ohio's Historical Places and has become a bed and breakfast inn. It is now owned by David Johnson and much of the renovation was supervised by his father. They are not related to our Nicholas family. But, the ghosts there, if there are any, are ours!

My grandfather Edwin L. Nicholas, was born in 1870 in Linn County, Iowa. His mother was Elizabeth Hoy Bradley Kerr Nicholas, Holmes' second wife. His first wife was Sarah Keith Nicholas. They had ten children before she died in 1855 in Muscatine County, Iowa. Elizabeth had been married first to Amos Kerr. He died young of typhoid fever from drinking water from a contaminated well. She too had been ill but survived and had an infant daughter Amy to raise. She was a school teacher and hired Holmes to add a room onto her small house. Holmes and Elizabeth were married in Linn County, Iowa. They had three children Lillian Nicholas Peters, William Bradley Nicholas and Edwin L., my grandfather. Lilly had five boys: George, Ray, Jay, Robert, Forest and a daughter Grace. Will had only one daughter Lura who married later in life and had no children. She cared for her mother as long as she lived. Will died young. He built

houses in Denver and in 1931, fell from the roof of one of them and was killed.

Edwin L. Nicholas, my grandfather married Minnie Edna Smith the 13th of March 1895 in Cherokee County, Iowa. By 1900 they had moved to Knox County, Nebraska. Two of their children Sherman and Gladys were born in Iowa and the two younger ones Nona and Earl, my father, were born in Knox County, Nebraska. All four of these children are deceased. These were then--the Nebraskans.

These early ancestors were carpenters by trade and farmers because the land was available. Grandpa Ed owned two different farms in Knox County. The first farm was near Bloomfield, Nebraska, and his brother Will built a new farm house there for him. The second farm was near Crofton, Nebraska. My dad told me his father farmed mostly corn and oats and raised cattle. This land was farmed later by Sherman, my dad's brother, and the last of the Nicholas farmers in our family. Sherman retired to Oregon following his son Gene west.

My father Earl was not destined to farm. After a couple of runaways with the team of farm horses, Grandpa finally realized that as well and he offered Dad the chance to go to college instead of helping him buy a farm. (Both of his sisters had gone to college enough to be able to teach in rural schools.) In 1930 Dad graduated from Wayne State Normal School in Wayne, Nebraska, now called Wayne State College. His college degree led him to take a Civil Service examination to work for the government and eventually to a job with the U.S. Weather Bureau. He became a weatherman--no farmer here.

My generation of the eight Nicholas first cousins were all born in Nebraska. Gene Nicholas farmed for a while after he returned from World War II, but Oregon's logging industry seemed to offer more opportunities. He is the oldest. His sister Ardis and her husband Marion Gust lived for a time on a farm and then moved to Yankton, South Dakota. And, the two sons of Aunt Gladys, Bruce and Merlyn McQuistan, both farmed for a while. Bruce farmed the longest, but he also had other interests. Rod, Donna Mae and Mavis Oak did not spend much time living on a farm. They moved to Douglas, Wyoming. I am the youngest and the first home I can remember was in Wichita, Kansas. Eventually we all moved to town. We moved back to Nebraska, transferred by the Weather Bureau in 1944. I do not think there is a carpenter or farmer among us. And, most of my cousins no longer live in Nebraska.

I am Earl's only child and a daughter--No Nicholas here. Sherman had one son Gene who had Roger, Robert and Danny and three daughters--Brenda, Jennifer and Janette. Robert has two daughters, Danny is single and Roger has only one son.... Brian (Nicholas)... are you there?

MARLENE NICHOLAS PLAMBECK-1995