

A Nichols' Family History

My mother, Rose Irene Nichols McWilliams passed away in September of 2012, and my father, Forest Thomas McWilliams in December of 2013. As my siblings and I gathered for their memorials, and shared our memories, it was clear that there was a lot we didn't know about our family heritage. So I have set out to save and pass on what I could recover of this story to my children and grand children. Sadly they have left us with many questions we should have asked while they and their parents were still with us. But I have found a few answers and a fascinating family history.

The Nichols and The Ross's

Part 1: Two Generations: Journeying Together: Michigan to California	Pages 2 - 7
Pictures and Maps	Pages 8 -10
Part 2: From California to Western Colorado – Gus Frost (Part 1)	Pages 11 -14
Pictures and Maps	Page 15
Past 3: Emmer D. Nichols and the Girl from India : Agnes Maud Lawford	Pages 16 -19
Pictures	Page 20
Pasr 4: Emmer's Many Livelihoods	Pages 21-28
Pictures	Page 29
Part 5: The Progressive Men of Western Colorado: The Ross's and Gus Frost (Part 2)	Pages 30 -38
Nichols Extended Family Trees Overview :	Pages 39 - 42
Barry's Research Notes on cyber-sleuthing the Nichols' family history	Pages 43 -46

In Preparation: The Next Nichols' Generations

- Part 6: The Froom's from Chicago
- Part 7: George and Helen Nichols and the “Four Pennies”
- Part 8: Rose Nichols Growing Up – An Album
- Part 9: Forest McWilliams and Rose – An Album

Also in preparation is a similar account of my great Grand fathers, David McWilliams and Ivan Hartley Wilson, and their families – who came west and settled in Eastern Colorado.

Two Generations, Traveling Together The Nichols and the Ross's

This is an exploration of the history of the George W. Nichols family. It is based in part on family story materials collected by Roy Nichols; and on Genealogical materials gathered by my brother, William J. McWilliams on the Nichols family. My cousin, Paul Michael Nichols has provided me with a lot of photographs and historical documents that were passed down to him on the Nichols family. Richard Armerding contributed a lot of Genealogical data on the Ross family: along with a book Remembering Our Ross Family Ancestors by John S Manion Jr, and on a lot of Census and other genealogical material accessed through ancestry.com. To this has been added some guess work of possibilities and a fair amount of googling of places and historical events.

Our family's "tradition" is summed up in this quote from my grandfather's obituary: *"A life-long resident of Western Colorado, George Washington Nichols was born Feb. 22, 1888, at Olathe, the son of Emmer Darwin and Agnes Maude (Lawford) Nichols. His father was born in Michigan and traveled to California by way of stagecoach to New York, by ship to Panama, across the Isthmus on mules, and then by ship to Fields Landing, Calif. He was taught the ship building trade by his father, then came to Montrose by horseback about 1882. Here he was engaged in farming and construction work."*

But this turns out to be actually the story of two families, **The Nichols** and **The Ross's**, who traveled together in the 1860's from Michigan to the Humboldt Bay area of California and then to the Sacramento Valley. The next generation would travel together from California to Western Colorado in the 1880's pioneering in the Umcompahgre Valley.

We know little about **Josiah Nichols**, the father of **Josiah Nichols** other than his birth date, 1795, and that he was possibly from Connecticut or New York. At some point, he moved to Michigan first to Yates County, then to Kent. In the 1850 Federal Census, **Josiah** (79) and his wife, **Sally Haskins** were living with his son, **Josiah** (25) and three grown daughters: **Harriet, Lucretia, and Eliza** in **Cannon, Kent, Michigan**. The hamlet had 2 mills and a store by 1845, and the town was platted to encourage residential growth.

From Michigan to California

Josiah Nichols was married to **Hannah Anner** (Henceforth "**Anna**") **Ross** on March 5th, 1854 in Michigan. Both **Josiah** and **Anna** had been born in **Stephentown, New York**. Their families seemed to have followed parallel routes to Michigan, moving first to **Yates/Livingston Counties**, New York and then to **Kent County**, Michigan. **Emmer Darwin Nichols** was born March 25th, 1855 in **Alcoma Township, Kent County, Michigan**, the first of their three children. **Algoma** was originally settled in 1843 and a township was established in 1849.

In 1856, C. C. Comstock of Grand Rapids founded a mill in the township. **Josiah Nichols** was listed in the 1860 Census as a "Head Sawyer" (Lumber mill saw operator) in **Algoma**. With him are his wife, **Anna**, Son **Emmer**, his 77 year old mother, **Sally Nichols** (b in Massachusetts) as well as a sister, **Harriet Nichols** age 38.

Anna's parents were **Joshua Ross**, a native of Vermont who settled in New York and married **Hannah (Rounds) Ross** in 1822, her parents were from Rhode Island. They had eight children between 1828 and 1845 including **Anna Anner** and her brother **Moses E. Ross**. They lived in **Stephentown NY** until about 1835, then in **Yates County, NY**. Sometime after 1845, the **Ross** family moved to Cedar Springs, **Michigan**. Established as a lumber town in 1856, Cedar Springs boasted numerous lumber and shingle mills. **Moses Ross** worked as "shingle weaver" – cutting and bundling wood shingles. He married **Eleanor Watkins** in 1853 – they would have nine children.

We have nothing on how or just when **Josiah** made this move – though the family tradition that he left Michigan to evade the draft might be a factor. Still, in August 1863, there is a draft registration recorded for **Moses Ross** with the Michigan 4th. Manion's Ross Family book says **Moses** hired someone to take his place in the War, commonly done. And it also says **Moses** wanted to get away from "stump" farming in Michigan. But it seems these brothers-in-law were both involved in lumber mill work in Michigan. So it is possible that the Redwood lumber boom may have attracted them to the Humboldt Bay, California.

About 1863-4, a party including possibly **Josiah**, **Anna Nichols** and son **Emmer** age nine, **Hannah's** brother **Moses E. Ross**, his wife and five of their children between the ages of ten and two including sons: **Lewis** and **John Jay** and three daughters: **Juliette**, **Nettie** and **Henrietta** relocated to **Fields Landing, California**. They traveled by stage coach to **New York**, and then by ship to **Panama**, then across the Isthmus on a Narrow Gauge Rail/ mules, and then again by a sailing ship to San Francisco and then by Steamer to **Field's Landing California** near **Eureka** on **Humboldt Bay**.

They must have arrived prior to the fall of 1864 when two children, **Charles L. Nichols** and **Elmer Humboldt Ross** were born. According to the Ross Family Book, **Josiah** had gone ahead to California leaving his wife and **Emmer** behind, and **Ellen Ross** was pregnant when they made this voyage. However it seems unlikely that **Josiah** had gone ahead and **Anna** came later in the Summer of 1864 since she gave birth in October 1864 to **Charles**, just a few months after they arrived in **Fields Landing**. We also know that **Josiah** and **Anna** "conveyed" (sold) land property in Michigan to **Eleanor Ross'** stepmother, **Lydia Watkins** on June 1, 1863 – at that time they were still resident in Michigan. On Sept 20th, 1864, the **Nichols**, now residents of California "conveyed" another piece of **Algoma**, Michigan property to a **Utica**, Michigan resident so the move had to take place between those dates.

Eleanor's mother, **Hannah Lewis Watkins** had died in 1850, leaving **John** with six children. and he married a widow, **Lydia Harbaugh Lewis**, who also brought six children from her first marriage to **William Lewis** who died in 1853. The 1860 Census for **John Watkins** in Kent County, Michigan reflects that confusing “his, hers, and theirs” household.

Josiah had settled in nearby **Elk River** where their third son, **Ernest J Nichols** was born in 1867. **Elk River** and **Fields Landing** are several miles south of **Eureka**. Later Censuses show **Josiah's** family living in **Ferndale**, which is south of the Eel River, and **Charles** living in **Bucksport** – which lies about 2.5 miles south of **Eureka's** downtown. All are in **Humboldt County**.

At the time, the **Eureka** area was experiencing a boom as the Redwood forests were being logged and converted to lumber. By 1859, the area around **Humboldt Bay** was “the most extensive lumber district in the state”, according to a state report. Within 30 years the North Coast had 400 mills cutting some of the largest trees in the world. Small shipyards built schooners that carried the lumber to build and rebuild the Victorian homes in San Francisco. The lumber industry grew significantly in the 1880's.

Moses worked for a time as a shingle weaver, according to John Manion's Ross family history_which said he produced about a 1,000 shingles a day, and once got enough shingles from a single redwood tree to cover a large warehouse. But Moses didn't like the coastal weather and his health suffered as well. A Mr. Allen, the Justice of the Peace who had married **Moses** and **Ellen Ross in Michigan** had moved from Michigan to **Vacaville**, and encouraged them to join them.

Josiah and **Moses** decided to give farming a try in the rich and fertile soil of **Solano County** – the eastern most county of the Northern **San Francisco Bay** area - he and **Moses** went to **Silveyville**, in **Solano County**. It was a rough overland journey of 240 miles that took 18 days for the **Ross** family – we have no information about the **Nichols'** move. **Ernest Nichols** was born in **Elk River** in March, 1867. The **Ross's** made their move in May of 1867. On August 1, 1867, **Josiah Nicols** (his name was misspelled) registered to vote in **Solano County**, **Moses'** family was definitely there in February, 1869 when his daughter **Stella Selina** was born.

About that time that **Silveyville** “migrated” to **Dixon**. Located midway between the **Bay Area** and **Sacramento** on the main route to the gold fields, **Silveyville** was founded by a man who realized that an easier way to make money would be to open an inn and saloon in the area, which he called "The Halfway House". In those days the trail was not yet defined and he would hang a red lantern high in the air so that any would be traveler would be able to find his way to his inn for the night. By 1865, this area was now being called **Silveyville** and boasted over 150 residents, a general store, a post office and a blacksmith to serve the needs of coaches traveling to **Sacramento**. When in 1868, the **California Pacific** tracks bypassed **Silveyville** by a couple of miles, the town

was moved closer to the tracks in 1871, and was soon renamed (Dickson) **Dixon**. The **Nichols** and **Ross**'s probably were there at that time as homes and a church were rolled on logs to the new location.

Moses in a letter extolled Solano County for its virtues and fertility. He liked its lack of stumps. It appears that both **Josiah** and **Moses** had bought or rented farms, rather than homesteaded. But **Moses** health was poor, and he had to supplement his income as a farm hand. The 1870 Selected U.S. Federal Census Non-Population Schedules show **Josiah Nichols** as having a farm in **Vacaville**, Solano County with 130 improved acres, 3 horses, one cow, growing Winter Wheat and Barley. He had registered to vote in Solano County in 1867. **Moses Ross** had a farm in **Silveyville**, Solano County with 300 improved acres, 10 Horses, 3 mules, 3 Milk Cows, also growing Winter Wheat and Barley. In the 1870 Federal Census, **Josiah Nicholas** (misspelled) – a farmer, **Agnes, Emmet** (misspelled) - in school, **Charles** and **Ernest** were in **Vacaville** in the 1870 Federal Census – Real Estate valued at \$6500 and Possessions at \$2000. In the same Census, the entire **Moses Ross** family down to **Stella** is found living in **Silveyville** – “**Lewis**” was misspelled as “**Louis**” Their real estate was valued at \$12,000 and \$12,000 possessions.

Edith E. Ross was born in **Vacaville** (which is about 12 miles from Dixon) in 1872 and **Maud Ross** in **Dixon (Silveyville)** in June, 1875 (The Ross's may have changed farms). Then a month later, **Moses E. Ross** died on July 10th, 1875 of stomach cancer, at the age of forty-six, leaving his wife with three children under the age of four. Both **Moses** and his wife, **Ellen**, are buried in **Dixon**, though **Ellen** actually would die at her son's home in Colorado in 1904.

When his father died a painful death from cancer of the stomach, **Lewis Ross** was nineteen years old and his brother, **John Jay (J. J.)** was seventeen – the sons took charge of the rented farm and aided their mother in rearing the younger children.

Juliette Ross married **James Marshall** in 1876 – he was 22 years older and had a 15 year old son – they lived in **Vacaville**. **James Marshall** had been a Captain in the U.S. Navy and commanded a vessel at the Battle of Vicksburg during the American Civil War.

After a couple of years, struggling to farm can provide for the family. **Lew** and **Jay** bought a farm on **Brannan Island** around 1877, across the Sacramento river downstream from **Rio Vista** and put in an orchard. But first they suffered a drought, and then in February, 1878. a major flood that broke dikes and washed everything away. Eleanor and the younger children went to Juliette's. The 1880 Federal Census shows **Eleanor** and her family living in **Georgiana Township**, Sacramento County, California – South of **Dixon** on a slough of the Sacramento River. **Gus Frost**, who was courting **Nettie** had leased a farm nearby and the same flood left him flat broke, lots more on him later.

When did **Josiah** leave **Solano County** and return to **Humboldt Bay**? It could be anywhere from 1871 and 1877 – we have no real evidence, beyond conjecture. Why? We don't know, perhaps the death of his close friend and brother-in-law in 1875 had something to do with it, though there seems to be no evidence of his involvement with the surviving Ross family either, suggesting he had left before 1875. Maybe bad crops – California required different varieties of wheat and methods of growing than in the midwest – such as sowing Spring Wheat in the Fall. Farmers were just learning this in the 1870s. Or some significant financial reverses – there was a Panic in 1873 that led to a depression in the United States and Europe that lasted into the 1890's. The value of his farm in **Ferndale** in 1880 was considerably less than the one in **Solano County**.

In the late 1800s, **Ferndale**, located farther South of **Eureka** and five miles inland, across the Eel River, blossomed as the agricultural center of Northern California. Now a popular tourist attraction, it is known for well-preserved Victorian store-fronts on main street and homes throughout the community, constructed when considerable wealth was generated in the dairy industry, especially during the 1880s. The entire town occupies just one square mile, and is registered as a California Historical Landmark.

Perhaps in **Ferndale**, **Josiah**'s skills as a builder were put to use crafting houses, and doing other construction work. His farm was smaller and worth a lot less than the one near Vacaville. The 1880 Non-Population Census misspelled his name as “Nicholas” and describes his farm in **Ferndale** with 19 acres tilled, 6 in meadows, and 5 in woodlands – land and buildings: \$600, Machinery \$25, Livestock \$100.

We don't have the 1890 Census due to a fire, but **Josiah** again registered to vote in **Ferndale** in 1888, and in July 1892 – we know from that latter registration that he had a sandy complexion, blue eyes, grey hair, he was 5'9” and his occupation was now “gardener,” his residence was in **Bucksport**, and his postal address was **Fields Landing**. So he must have retired, he was 69, and was living with one of his sons, **Ernest**, a blacksmith, or **Charles**, a mill trolleyman at this time.

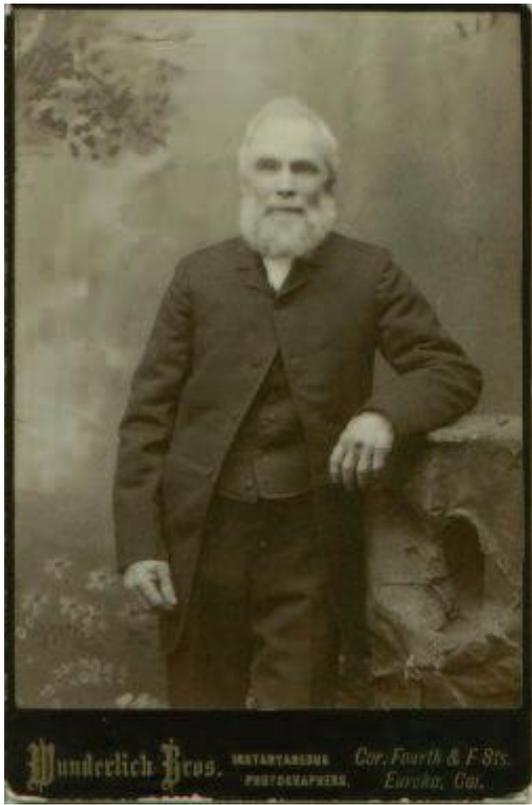
The family tradition said **Josiah** was a shipwright and passed those skills on to his son, **Emmer**. But while there were a number of small ship yards on the **Humboldt Bay** – and many lumber schooners were built to carry the redwood from the mills to build and rebuild (after fires) Victorian homes in **San Francisco** and elsewhere especially in the 1880's – there seems to be little space in **Josiah**'s time line and locations for this to have taken place. Despite his mill experience in Michigan, **Josiah** is repeatedly designated as a farmer in California. There were no shipyards near **Ferndale**. And **Emmer** was too young before they moved to **Solano County**, and probably on his own soon after they returned to Eureka. He was 25 and living on his own by 1880. But maybe he learned about building houses – **Ferndale** was in a Victorian “building boom.”

There are death records at the **Humboldt Co. Library** for both **Josiah** and his wife, **Anna**, but nothing mentioned about his parents. He died 21 Apr 1898, age 75 of a stroke. She died 24 Feb 1907 cause listed as old age. Both died in **Fields Landing**. They are both buried at **Ocean View Cemetery**.

Josiah's Other Sons

Josiah's son **Charles L Nichols** was listed in the 1910 and 1920 Federal Censuses as a “Tallyman” – who cuts lumber to specifications for customers, for *Pacific Lumber*, a job he had for 30 years – living in **Bucksport**. They built a nice house alongside a much more modest structure that Josiah and Anna lived in. He married his wife **Esther Isabel Atwell** on April 24, 1907. She was 20 years younger and they had five children. **Charles** died in 1936 in **Fields Landing**, his wife in 1969.

Ernest Jay Nichols was a 33 year old blacksmith living with his parents in **Bucksport** in 1896, when he registered to vote; and with his recently widowed 68 year old mother in the 1900 Census. The 1910 Census shows “**Earnest**” was a butcher in **White Bird**, Idaho. He married in 1919, his wife **Minnie McConnell** was 21 years younger. In the 1920 Census for **Ernst** and **Minnie** “**Nicholas**,” Ernest was a Confectioner and **Minnie** had a ranch (homestead). In the 1940 Census they were still in **White Bird**. Roy remembers “Uncle Ernie” coming to help with the honey harvest, and going fishing on **Grand Mesa** with **George Nichols**, and thought he lived in **Wenatchee**, Wa. **Minnie** died in 1941 in Humboldt, California. **Ernest** died on May 3, 1951 in **Brewster**, Okanogan, Washington.



Josiah Nichols



Anna Nichols



Emmer & Anna



Anna - Field's Landing



Ferndale, Humboldt County 1895



Sally Hawkins Nichols



Anna Nichols



Humboldt County



Solano County

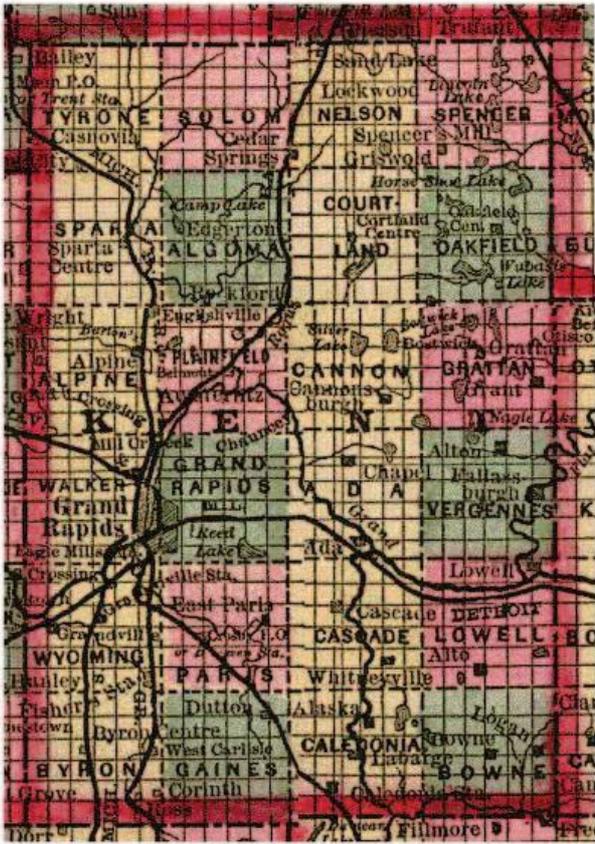


Charles Home - Josiah's in Back



Charles Nichols and Wife

From Michigan to California - Maps



Kent County Michigan
Townships



DETAIL OF A 1919 MAP OF SOLANO COUNTY CALIFORNIA

From California to Colorado

At this point, the next generation, **Emmer Nichols** and the **Ross Family** made their journeys to Colorado.

Emmer is not mentioned in the Ross Family accounts and the author wasn't aware of the time **Josiah Nichols** spent farming in **Vacaville**, or that the **Nichols** were even related until research on his book discovered it, even though he had visited **George Nichols** farm as a child. He thought that **Emmer** and **Ernest** (who was 16) came in 1883, but The History of Colorado (1917) says 1882, **Emmer** staked land North of Lewis'. Some other relatives of **Eleanor Ross** also came from Michigan about this same time **Marcus, Elmer, Ernest**, and **Charles Young** settled a bit further north, west of **Olathe**.

As to the date, **Emmer** was counted in the 1880 Federal Census in **Lancaster** (now **Woodland**), Cowlitz County, Washington where the Lewis River flows into the Columbia. Interestingly, he was residing in the household of **Frederick Lee Lewis**, one of **Woodland**'s first pioneers. It seems likely that he may have been building houses at the time. **Woodland** was established around **C.C. Bozarth's** store in 1881, **Millie Lewis's** brother. **Emmer's** move to Colorado was probably after **Gus Frost** and **Nettie Ross's** wedding in **Vacaville** in October, 1880. But why the trip? It is likely that a new brother-in-law, **Augustine Amos "Gus" Frost** had something to do with this. As he will be a significant part of the story to follow, we must get acquainted with him.

Gus Frost : The Early Years 1852 – 1881

According to an article in A History of California (1917), copied by Roy Nichols, **Gus A. Frost** was born in West Virginia on the 11th of April, 1852. In 1865, he at the age of 13 and his parents crossed the plains with ox teams settling first at a Halladay Stagecoach Station near **Longmont**, Colorado, where **Amos K Frost** and his wife lived for four years, and then a farm about fifty miles south of **Denver** near . **Gus** left home at the age of 15, in 1867 working on the Union Pacific for three months, then took a wagon of freight to **Fort Phil Kearny** where he was caught up in the fighting in Red Cloud's War.

Returning to Colorado with a group of men, fighting Indians along the way, he next participated in a drive of herd of 3,000 cattle from Texas to Denver along the Chisholm Trail in 1870-71, on which he met **Jim** and **Jesse O'Neill** and **Al Neale** (who would later also become Uncompahgre Valley pioneers), and then after returning to **Colorado Springs**, **Gus** logged timber above **Colorado City** in Ute Pass for the D&RGW for several years.

Gus headed to California in 1874, stopping off at Virginia City, where he got a brief taste of mining, then he worked on a wheat farm at **Marysville**, and then leased a vegetable farm on **Brannan Island**, only to be flooded out in The Flood of 1878. This may not entirely jive with the facts. **Gus Frost** appears on Voter Registration lists for **Vacaville** in 1876, and for **Silver Mountain, Alpine County**, California in 1877 – now a mining ghost town in an entirely

rural county – Alpine County is South of Lake Tahoe and East of Sacramento on the Nevada State Line. At some point during his time in California, possibly at **Vacaville** or **Brannan Island**, **Gus Frost** met and fell in love with **Nettie Ross**, a sister of **Jay J.** and **Lewis Ross**. Apparently the couple decided to get married as soon as he earned sufficient funds for them to start their marriage.

So **Gus** after promising to come back in a year, set out to earn enough to come back and claim his bride. This did not come easy, he spent time in **Leadville** where he met **H.A.W. Tabor** before **Tabor** became rich and famous. Unable to save any money in **Leadville**, he and other miner, **George Hall** set out with a burro of supplies, for the San Juan Mountains, passing through the Uncompahgre Valley on the way. After two years in the **Silverton** region, while supervising a cross cut for the **Silver Crown Mine** he saved up a sufficient stake of \$1,100 to return for his bride.

According to the History of Colorado (1917) “*At some point, after reaching his majority, **Gus Frost** engaged in mining in San Juan county, devoting his attention to gold and silver mining. He afterward became Superintendent of a mine.*” So in the Spring of 1880, in the 1880 Federal Census, **Gus Frost** is found in two places, listed both with his parents in **Colorado Springs** as a miner, and in **Ophir, Ouray County**, Colorado as a prospector.

The **Silver Crown Mine** at an elevation of 10,899 feet was located south of Red Mountain Pass and a mile west of **Chattanooga, Colorado**, now a ghost town on the “horseshoe” turn of the “Million Dollar Highway” Colorado 550, and about 6 miles from **Silverton** and **Ophir**. **Otto Mears**, the “*pathfinder of the San Juans*” would open up this rugged mountain region first with toll roads, and then by rail in 1887 with his *Silverton and Silverton Northern Railroads*. Mears would also move the Utes out of the Uncompahgre Valley, and found the town of **Montrose**.

The Move to Colorado

*“In October 28, of 1880, Gus Frost from Colorado married **Mary Alnetta (Nettie) Ross**, the sister of **John Jay** and **Lewis Ross** on October 28, 1880 at **Vacaville, California** at the home of his sister **Juliette Marshall**.”*

Emmer's cousins probably met **Gus Frost** at the time of his courtship and marriage. It is possible that **Emmer** might have attended the wedding of his cousin – if not, he probably was in contact with the **Ross** family. **Gus** had recently come from Colorado and likely told them of the early 1880's Silver and Gold mining boom in the San Juan Mountains and the possibilities of farming and settlement as the Utes' lands were opened up – miners needed farmers and stock men to feed them – and soon the *Denver and Rio Grande Western* would open other markets as well. There were those eager to start towns and businesses in this yet undeveloped region. These three young men were likely “hungry” for opportunity in a time of national depression, and the **Ross's** had their larger family to provide for as well.

After **Gus** and **Nettie**'s wedding and a honeymoon in San Francisco, where **Nettie** had the measles, the **Frost**'s traveled to **Colorado Springs** to his parents' home. **Nettie**'s expensive wedding dress purchased by Captain Marshall, Juliette's husband, would travel with her through rough and tumble adventures to Colorado and is today in the museum in **Montrose**.

The first settlers came to the **Uncompahgre Valley** in the 1870s, but legally could not purchase land there until after September 1881, when the Ute Indians were forcibly removed from their land and put on a reservation in Utah. The first stake was driven in December of 1881. In 1882, **Montrose** officially became a town. The town of **Montrose** was founded originally to provide supplies to nearby mining communities. With the mines' decline, agriculture soon took over as the major economy. Settlers worked the fertile valley soil producing fruits, grains, vegetables, feed, and livestock.

Soon after **Gus Frost** and his bride, **Nettie**, departed for Colorado **Jay Ross** followed by train through **Cheyenne, Denver** to **Colorado Springs** where **Gus Frost**'s parents lived. In November, **Gus** and **Jay** set out for Silverton by rail, coach, and finally, on foot 55 miles in the dead of Winter. **Lewis** followed in May of 1882, bringing along **Nettie** from **Colorado Springs** to **Silverton** where the four lived in a cabin and worked in the mines. But after “mining” a few months, they went back to something they knew better and homesteaded in the **Uncompahgre** valley, then a part of **Gunnison County**, taking land by exemption according to the **Homestead Act of 1862**. When the word came that the Utes were being removed from the Uncompahgre Valley, **Jay J.** and **Gus** were the first to enter the valley, on foot with a burro, on September 7, 1881, just four days after the Utes had departed. They staked out some promising flat land between the river and the mesa near some cottonwoods and Spring Creek, a location the soldiers had used as a campsite recently. **Gus** returned to retrieve **Lew** and **Nettie Frost** and their possessions (including a trunk containing her iridescent blue silk wedding dress) in a spring wagon while **Jay** built a rude cabin from poles the soldiers left behind on their campsite when removing the Indians and scrounged around for “cookware.”

Family tradition has they arrived with \$2.50 in their pockets. Actually that was **Jay Ross**. Despite their efforts mining, they needed money, so they worked for the *Denver and Rio Grand Western* railroad, building it's tracks to Montrose. Even **Nettie** became involved, cooking for some of the construction crew. **Gus Frost**'s land was not good farming land - due to alkaline in the soil - but the tracks were built across it - and the **Frost Switch** was named for him. Finally, they set about clearing their land of cottonwoods, leveling it, and digging irrigation ditches and putting in some crops of potatoes, corn and vegetables. A cabin with a board floor and sod roof was built, later in 1882, the Ross brothers would build on their own lands. The first crops in 1882 earned them \$1800. On October 19th, 1882, the rest of the **Ross**'s, their mother, **Eleanor**, brother, **Elmer**, and sisters, **Hettie**, **Stella**, **Edith** and **Maud**, arrived in **Montrose** and the family was reunited and started their new lives.

Family tradition says **Emmer** arrived by horseback in 1882. Was he at the wedding and did he hear Gus's encouragements to come to Colorado? Possibly. In the 1880's, there were coach and railroads available for travel – the **Central Pacific** even passed through **Dixon**. He might have taken the train part of the way – the route **Gus** and the **Ross's** took went through **Cheyenne** and **Denver** and **Colorado Springs** - or perhaps he actually did ride on horseback from California. Roy says he also engaged in mining with **Gus Frost** though there is no mention of this in the Interviews with the **Ross'** and **Gus Frost** in the 1930's, and **Gus** was busy with the D&RG and his homestead in 1882.. But however and whenever he arrived, his brother's in law probably expected his coming and had likely already staked out land for him, since his was adjacent to theirs. Some other other relatives arrived as well, the **Young's** from Michigan. There was quite a land rush and good land went quickly. The area around what would become **Olathe** where the **Frost's** **Ross's** and **Emmer** settled was called the Menoken community.

Montrose was first established in 1881, but the first site wasn't good for the depot, so a “new town” was laid out in 1882 – with a variety of names: “**Uncompahgre, Uncompahgre Junction, Ute City, Dadstown, Pomana**” before **Joseph Selig** suggested **Montrose** after a book by Sir Walter Scott. Some confusion resulted – some thought it was “**MT Rose.**” Though offered town lots, **Gus, Lew** and **Jay J.** turned them down preferring to farm and sell produce to the towns people. The town was built up as rapidly as materials could be had.

Olathe, about 10 miles North of **Montrose**, was first named “**Brown**” (the Post Office name) and “**Colorow**” (the D&RG Rail Road name – after a defiant Ute Chief) – but both names had been used elsewhere, so it was finally named after the town in Kansas. A Post Office named **Menoken** was briefly established between “**Brown**” and **Montrose** in 1891-92, hence the name for its surrounding “community” then moved back to **Brown. Olathe** was incorporated in 1907.

The narrow gauged *Denver and Rio Grande* Railroad arrived from the East over Monarch Pass and Gunnison coming through the Black Canyon in September of 1882, it would then build North to **Delta** and **Grand Junction** and West to **Salt Lake** and **Ogden**, and South to **Ouray** and **Ridgeway** in 1887 from a “wye” just South of town. The main line was converted to Standard Gauge in 1906, but the **Ouray** branch remained Narrow Gauge.

In March, 1883, **Montrose, Mesa** and **Delta Counties** were carved out of the largely undeveloped **Gunnison Country**. **Jay J. Ross** was one of the instigators circulating petitions for this change.



First Building in Montrose

MAPS AND PICTURES - THE MOVE TO COLORADO



Detail of 1895 Map of Western Colorado
Olathe is called Colorow - Chattanooga above Silverton



Olathe Street Scene



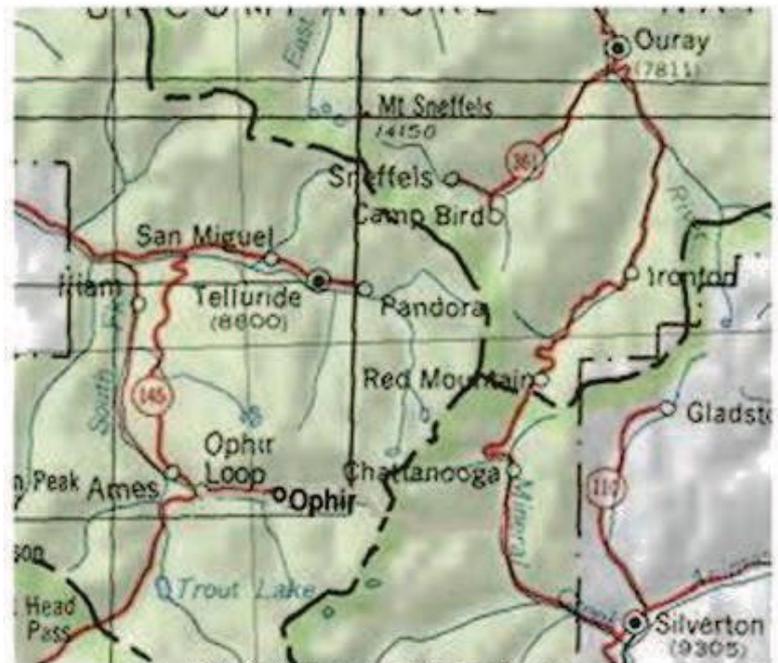
Montrose Main Street



Ouray Toll Road



Chattanooga, San Juan Mtns, Colorado 1887



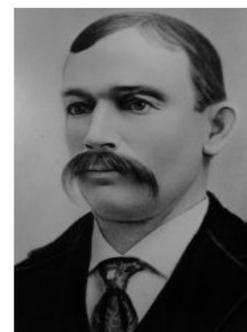
Detail of San Juans Mining Region
Showing Ophir, Telluride, Chattanooga, Silverton and Ouray

Emmer D. Nichols and the Girl from India

But it is on **Emmer D. Nichols** that we want to focus. First, on his marriage to a girl from India, then on his homesteading and his various livelihoods.



Emmer D. Nichols married **Agnes Maud Lawford** in November, 1884 in Montrose, Colorado. **Emmer** was eleven years older – she was still a teenager – likely fascinating, with an English Accent and stories of India and a difficult life. But her life and experiences had made this young woman tough enough to be a pioneer wife.



Agnes Maud Lawford was born September 12, 1866 in Calcutta, East India, (daughter of **Edward Henry Acland Lawford** (1829-1873) and **Ann Amelia Kayes**). **Agnes'** father was the son of a British officer in India, Major General **Edward Lawford** (1809-1871) who had been Chief Royal Engineer in Mysore, India in the 1860's. Her father was married twice – his first marriage to **Ellen Alexandrina Riley** produced two girls who were born in Australia and ended up living with relatives in England after her death in 1861 in India: **Emily Clara** [who would marry the Dickens illustrator **George Fredric Kitton**] and **Ellen Rose Louise (Nelly)** [who married a mariner, **Charles Devine**].

Widowed, **Edward** remarried on August 26th, 1862 to **Ann Amelia Kayes** at St. John's Church in Calcutta, and four more children were born: **Violet Alice Lawford, Margaretta Acland Lawford, Agnes Maud Lawford and Williams Edward Lawford.**



Her father left the British Army possibly for health reasons, and left India sometime after **William's** birth in 1868, in the 1871 Census he and his four children were visiting England, and they eventually ended up in **San Francisco** where possibly **Edward** died in 1873. According to the Nichols family tradition, after his death, **Ann Amelia** was unable to support her four children, who went to foster families. Roy Nichols says that there was much discussion amongst **Edward's** orphaned children, and subsequently among their children, as to why **Edward's** family in England did not come to the rescue. They were “rumoured to have plenty of money”. But there is more to this story. In the 1871 Census in Essex, West Ham England, we find **Edward** and his wife **Ann**, and their four children, **Amy Violet** age 7, **Margaretta Acland** age 5, **Agnes** age 4 and **William** age 2. They may have been visiting a relative, Katherine Neal. Edward had returned (from) *India*, vocation listed as *Office*. A second son was born. **Frances A. H. Lawford** – he was baptized on July 3rd, 1872 in Middlesex, England.

But it seems America beckoned and soon after this, Edward must have gone ahead to California. In the 1873 San Francisco City Directory, we find an **Edward H. Lawford** living in the Franklin Hotel and working as a clerk for H. E. Highton, who was a very successful lawyer in California who himself came to San Francisco from England in 1856.

On February 5th, 1873, **Amelia Lawford**, and her five children arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, on the Peruvian arriving from Halifax. Edward was not with them. By March, she and the children had travelled, probably by train to San Francisco. Sadly, we find that on March 12th, little **Frances** died of measles (he was about 8 months old) and his sister **Amy Violet** also died of measles on March 25th. Of their father, **Edward**, we know nothing more, but apparently he also died about this time. Having just arrived, suddenly widowed and losing two children to death, the Lawford family was shattered.

Ann Amelia Lawford married **E. J. Osborne** in Sprucemount, Nevada on October 26th, 1878, though the marriage seems to have ended quickly. The 1880 Federal Census shows a divorced nurse, **Ann Osborne**, living in Cherry Creek, White Pine, Nevada with two of her children children – **Agnes**, age thirteen, and **William**, age eleven. **Margaretta**, as we shall see, had gone to a foster home near Mariposa, California.

Cherry Creek, Nevada was in the midst of a wild mining boom at the time – it must have been a rough place for **Ann** and her children. Located in Eastern Nevada it was a barren landscape. The boom of 1880-1883 was the most economically prosperous period in **Cherry Creek's** history, as more deposits of gold and silver were discovered. By the end of 1881, a single one of the larger mines locally employed over 200 men. By 1882, the community was estimated to have a population of 7,800, of which 6,000 were estimated to be transient mine workers. During this time, 28 saloons were located in **Cherry Creek** and there were a substantial variety of stores and local businesses, catering to local mine workers. But in 1883, a financial crash devastated the local economy. Many mines closed, and the community entered a rapid decline. In 1888, a fire destroyed a substantial portion of the business district.

Of the older sister, **Margaretta Acland Nichols**, her whereabouts were long a mystery, though we knew from the **Nelly Devine** letters (which will be mentioned later) the sisters and stepsisters kept in touch with her. In the 1880 Federal Census, **Marg't Lawford** is found in Mariposa, California, adopted daughter of **Gilbert** and **Hannah Douglas** – she was 15 and it gave “Hindustan” as the birth place for her and her birth father and “England” for her mother. In the **Nelly Devine** letter in 1892, there is a comment that “*Margaretta has been busy with her school. How very kind Mr and Mrs Douglas are to her.*” An Obit for **Hannah Douglas** reveals that she was well educated, and had come to California to teach and married a Miner in 1861, named **Gilbert Douglas**. He was a partner with **William Randolph Hearst's** father, and they were intimates with the **Stanfords**, the **Clarks** and the **Hutchinsons**, prominent Californians.

Following the panic of 1873, the **Douglasses** had moved to Coulterville, a small mining town about 26 miles north of Mariposa, California. Quiet years followed “with her husband, and her books, and many friends visiting including **John Muir** – who would help create Yosemite National Park. They had no children of their own, but **Margaretta**, it seems grew up well educated and loved by these foster parents. When **Hannah Douglas**' husband passed away in 1890, she returned to Colorado where she put five nieces through college. So perhaps **Margaretta Lawford** was a teacher, **Nelly** had commented she was “*busy with her school*” and apparently still in Coulterville in 1890 now in her twenties. Through a DNA connection some more of her story has been found.

In 1896, she married a fisherman, **Denie Becker** in Los Angeles. He came to California in 1867 and was naturalized in 1897. He was 14 years older. A son, **Gilbert Douglas Becker** was born to them in December, 1897, and the family was living together in Wilmington, Los Angeles in the 1900 Census. But for some reason, they divorced soon after. He continued to live in Los Angeles into the 1930's. There is a marriage certificate of a **Mrs Margaretta A Becker** to a 59 year old farmer named **Miles Henry Strong** in Alma, Wa in February, 1901. How she got there and why this came about we don't know. He was 23 years older and died just three years later in 1904. What happened to **Margaretta** after this, we also don't know, but her son “**Duglas**” went into the foster care of **Charles and Laura A Ward** in Daisy, Oregon some time before the 1910 Census when he was 12 – he served in the Army in WWI and returned to Laura's home (she was now widowed) as a foster son in the 1920 Census. He married **Virginia Harried Bates** in 1926, they raised six children in the Chehalis, Wa area where he worked for Puget Power as a draftsman till his death in 1974. A DNA connection confirms all this.

A mystery is how and where **Emmer** and **Agnes** met – Family tradition says **Agnes** was in an orphanage in **Napa** when she met her future husband, she was eighteen at the time, and possibly worked at the orphanage. **Emmer** was in Colorado by that time. one of the first settlers to enter the Uncompahgre Valley – of course, he may have returned to California to visit family. **Agnes** had last been seen in Nevada in 1880 at the same time that **Emmer** had been in Cowlitz County, Washington.

The **City of Napa** suggests a possible clue to how they could have met in **Napa**, a likely place for **Ann Osborne** and her two children to gravitate to from the boom town in Nevada. Founded in 1847, in the mid-1850s, **Napa**'s Main Street rivalled that of many larger cities, with as many as 100 saddle horses tied to the fences on an average afternoon. Hotels were crowded, cash slugs and California coinage were plentiful. Saloons and gambling emporiums were numerous. After the first severe winter in the gold fields, miners sought refuge in the young city from snow, cold, floods and disease. There was plenty of work in the valley for disillusioned miners. Many cattle ranches were maintained, and the lumber industry had mushroomed. Sawmills in the valley were in operation. The Napa Silver Rush in 1858 began in Napa Valley, and miners eagerly flocked to the eastern hills, with quicksilver mines operating in

many areas of **Napa County**.

Agnes and her mother and brother could easily have gone from **Cherry Creek** to **Napa** and as **Agnes** got older, she may have found work there. The **City of Napa** occupied a significant transportation hub as well. **Emmer** would probably travel through **Napa** whether he was heading West to **San Francisco** or North towards **Eureka** where his parents were living. "The spot was a natural location for the town since it was at the uppermost point of river navigation, necessitating a change in transportation mode and thus a natural trade and transportation center for travellers and agricultural, commercial and industrial goods." Steamboat traffic ran to and from from **San Francisco** and a ferry took travellers over the Sacramento to points South. The **California Pacific** became part of the **Central Pacific** in 1876 and it ended at **Napa**, which lay close to the western edge of **Solano County**.

Several letters from her half-sisters in England have survived dated from 1882 to 1909. In one of them, her sister **Nelly Devine** [who also had just married in August of 1884] clearly refers to Agnes' marriage as she wrote in December, 1884: "*I cannot let this year quite tick away without writing to wish you every happiness in the new one. . . Dearest Agnes it seems likely to bring about a great change in your life, which I trust may be for your true happiness. I did so like to hear all you had to tell me of my new brother (brother in law) that is to be. I do hope you will go to Colorado in the spring and that you will like your new relations much indeed. It would indeed be nice for you if Mama can manage to get a farm near you and to bring you, Margaretta and Willie together again. I can quite fancy how much you long to see them all once again.*"

It is obvious that **Agnes Maud Lawford** was smitten with **Emmer Nichols**. Agnes was the first woman to arrive by train to Montrose, Colorado. They were married in **Montrose**, Colorado on November 30th, 1884. In the Colorado 1885 Census, **Emmer, Agnes**, his mother, **Anna**, and brothers **Charles and Earnest** were at his place near **Olathe**. They were probably on an extended visit and getting acquainted with the new Mrs. Nichols.

It also seems from the letter, that **Agnes** had expressed hopes of re-uniting her own family – though there is no evidence that happened, her mother must have still been alive at that time – though we have no more information about her. **Agnes'** brother, **William Lawford**, appears in the 1910 and 1920 Censuses, a bookkeeper for a wholesale clothing business, married to a **Margaret Blanche** (last name unknown, possibly Peck) from Illinois, and living in **San Francisco**. She was about four years younger than him. He died in 1923 in **San Francisco**. Agnes visited them around 1906.

In a January, 1892 letter, **Nelly** wrote to **Agnes**: "*I hope you and yours are all well and that Emmer is getting on well and making money as fast as his Bees make honey. Yours indeed must be a busy life, I hope and think a very happy one too. Children are indeed blessings.*"

Emmer and **Agnes** had six children: **Alice Violet Nichols** (1885); **George Washington Nichols** (1888), **Harry Lawford Nichols** (1889), **Elsie Anna Nichols** (1896) and **Irva Maud Nichols** (1889); all five born in Montrose; The Sixth, **Alvan A. Nichols** (December 15-19, 1906) was born to **Agnes** in Los Angeles, Ca, only lived for four days.



In a June 9, 1909 letter **Nelly** wrote:” *I was sorry to find you had had a bad time during the winter, I hope you will be able to get away next winter, but moving a family is no light task, however I hope the Gunnison Tunnel of which you speak, or rather write, will bring about a change in affairs, and enable you to get away. Twenty five years is a long time to be in one place, especially when one is no older than you are.*”

Emmer served a couple terms as *County Assessor* beginning in 1896. In 1904, **Emmer** entered into the Sawmill business with **Gus Frost**. We have records of timber land purchases by **Emmer** and **Agnes** in 1906 and 1910, the **Frosts** in 1911 and 1915. By 1910, Their children had all grown to adulthood. In the Spring 1910 Federal Census, the family was still residing Montrose. **George** and **Harry** were on their own sharing a place in Montrose. **Alice Violet** had married **Andrew Anderson Woods** in 1904 and was also in Montrose - they would eventually have ten children – three were already born in 1910. **Emmer** and **Agnes** had moved into Montrose by 1900 – a brick home he built. **George Nichols** would go off to the Army in February of 1918. **Elsie** married **Marion Edward Decker** in Montrose on July 14th, 1918.



Sometime around 1922 or 1923, **Emmer** and **Agnes** and **Irva** moved to California, living in Los Angeles. In the 1920 Census, **Emmer** and **Anna** and **Irva** were apparently visiting with **Charles** and his family in **Eureka**, but a family photo of Emmer, Agnes and most of their family was taken in Colorado probably in 1921. Roy says “*They later moved to California, Where Emmer Died on 21 May 1925, Agnes died in California also on 7 Apr. 1928.*” Both died in **Los Angeles**, they were living there in 1923 when her brother, William, died,



and are buried somewhere in the Los Angeles area. Their married daughter **Elsie Anna Decker** was living in the Los Angeles Area in the 1920's. Daughter **Irva Maud** would marry **Ralph Raymond Tedford** on September 30th, 1925 in **Los Angeles**, she likely was living with her parents till her marriage.



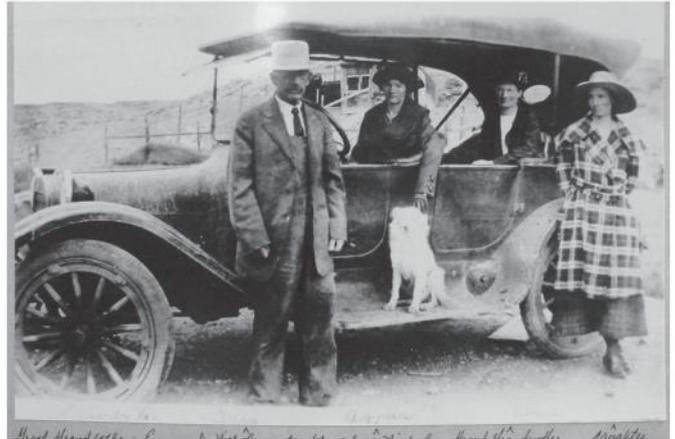
For more on Edward H A Lawford :

<http://lawfordherry.blogspot.com/2009/01/edward-henry-acland-lawford-and-his.html>

Emmer and Agnes - Photos



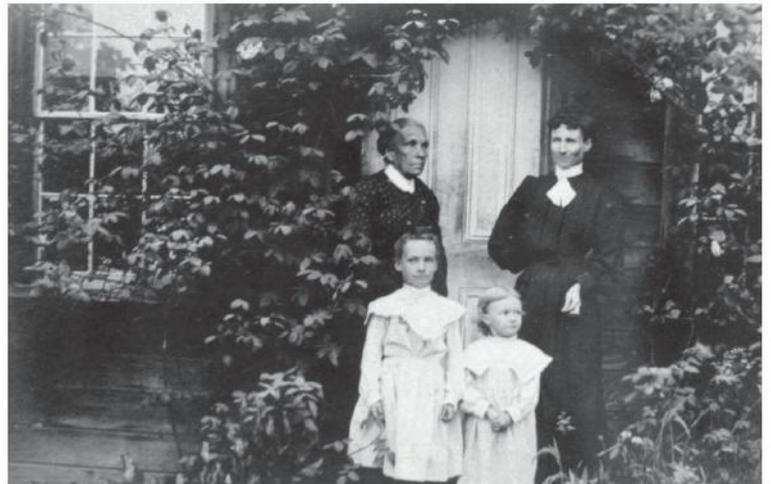
Harry, Alice and George Nichols



Emmer, Irva, Agnes and Elsie Nichols



Irva, Blanche Lawford, Agnes Nichols, Elsie - San Francisco abt 1906



Anna Nichols, Agnes Nichols, Elsie and Irva - Fields Landing - abt 1906



At left is Emmer, Alice Nichols Woods holding Charlotte Woods, George W. Nichols, Agnus Maude Nichols, Ernie Nichols (hat pulled back) Andy Woods (hat), Ed Decker with tie, Elsie Decker, Girls : Crocia Woods ,Fern Woods, Emmer Woods behind Laura Nichols, Ada Nichols, Elsie Nichols Decker, Right Harry Nichols with daughter Virginia, Irva with Fluff the Dog
At the farm house on the Mesa likely in the Fall of 1921.



Emmer and Agnes Nichols
in California

Emmer Nichols' Many Livelihoods

Emmer Nichols kept himself very busy. Roy Nichols says quite a bit about the grandfather that he never knew. There is an article on him in The History of Colorado (1917), and more can be learned about him from pictures and other documents. He was a pioneer, a farmer, a builder, an apiarist. He served as a Country Assessor. He had a sawmill and a greenhouse. He was involved in other civic roles as well.

We don't know much of **Emmer's** work history before coming to Colorado. He was in his teens, and finishing his schooling when his family moved back to the Pacific Coast from Solano County. He must have been well educated – given later roles as Country Assessor, and Secretarial roles for various organizations. He would have been about twenty seven years old when he arrived in Colorado which means that he had considerable years of work experiences which prepared him for the endeavors he undertook in **Montrose**. He doubtless already knew about farming and livestock – those were basic for the times, and he possibly knew something of irrigation from the Solano County years.

Emmer Nichols may have learned something about building houses – as **Ferndale** was in the midst of a “gingerbread” building boom in the late 1870's and early 1880's. **Ferndale**, sometimes also referred to as “cream city,” is known for well-preserved Victorian Gingerbread store-fronts on main street and homes throughout the community, which are also known as “Butterfat Palaces,” due to their construction during an epoch wherein considerable wealth was generated in the dairy industry, especially during the 1880s. The entire town is registered as a California Historical Landmark. That he built his home in **Montrose**, and other homes there, of brick or block is interesting – the homes he built in **Montrose** appear to be well designed.

Family stories tell of ship building and bridge building – **Emmer** very well could have had experience with those occupations in the Humboldt Bay region. In 1875, **Emmer** was twenty years old. **George Nichols'** obit says of Emmer, “*He was taught the ship building trade by his father, then came to Montrose by horseback about 1882. There he was engaged in farming and construction work.*”

There was ship building boom in the Humboldt in the 1870's and 80's - schooners were built to carry Douglas Fir and Redwood lumber out of various sawmills' “dog hole” ports to markets in San Francisco played a major role in the historic west coast lumber trade. Most notable among builders was **Hans Ditlev Bendixsen**. His shipyard in **Fairhaven** spread out over fourteen acres with shops, sawmills, slips, timber yards, even cottages and gardens for 150 workers. **Fairhaven** was across the bay from **Bucksport** on the east side of the peninsula extending south. Between 1875 and 1901, **Bendixsen** launched fifty three and four-mast schooners from his **Fairhaven** yard, and in his lifetime he built 115 vessels of all types, many for the lumber trade.

After many good years, an economic crisis within the lumber industry in 1877 forced **Bendixsen** to sell his shipyard so that he could pay his employees and creditors. He rented the shipyard from the new owners and continued to build ships. Seven years later he was able to buy back the shipyard. In 1901, it was worth over a million dollars.

The lumber schooners were built of the same Douglas Fir as the planks they carried. They had shallow drafts for crossing coastal bars, had uncluttered deck arrangements for ease of loading, as much of the cargo was kept on deck, and were especially handy for maneuvering into the tiny, Northern California ports. These ships needed to return to the lumber ports without the expense of loading ballast. Many West Coast lumber schooners were also rigged without topsails, a configuration referred to as being *baldheaded*. This rig simplified tacking into the strong westerlies when bound north. Crews liked baldheaders because no topmast meant no climbing aloft to shift or furl the sails. If more sail was desired then it could be set by being hoisted from the deck. By 1882, the form of the West Coast lumber vessels had become well established and were a radical departure from the New England built ships.

It is thus very possible in the years between the mid 1870's when Josiah returned to the area and 1880, that **Emmer** may have worked in the ship yards on the California Coast. At some point, he was on his own – in the 1880 Census, a “farm laborer” in soon to be Washington State. Interestingly, we find him residing in the household of **Frederick Lee Lewis** – who was one of the first pioneers in that area and one of the founders of the community that would become **Woodland**, Cowlitz County, Washington State. When and how **Emmer** got there, we have no idea – its possible that he might have come with a load of lumber on one of those schooners. We know there was a disruption in the lumber trade in 1877, which might have left him looking for work. We know that some of the houses in that area were built with lumber shipped in. **Emmer** is listed as a farm laborer, but there was plenty of farm work closer to home. It may be that **Emmer** was building houses there or doing other construction – farmhouses built around that time are similar to some he built in the **Montrose** area. These structures were built in the “vernacular style” done without benefit of formal plans, to suit the needs of the family building it.

An 1878 house built near **Lancaster** was a two-story single-family farm house of wood frame construction with ship lap siding, and vertical corner-boards, that sat on a wood post and beam foundation. Windows are single-panes, double-hung. There was an open east side porch. on the South side of the house facing the road, a balcony above the front entry.

Living in the household of Frederick Lee Lewis may have made another contribution to **Emmer's** “education.” He very likely heard **Frederick** tell stories about homesteading on the Columbia River, and observed the beginnings of a community. Soon, **Emmer** would be himself homesteading.

Frederick and his half-brother **Adolphus Lee Lewis** (also spelled Lewes) were the first settlers there where the Lewis River (named after the Lewis of Lewis and Clark) flows into the Columbia in 1845. They built a store in 1852 which operated for 3 years, and filed for **Donation Land Claims** (allowed since while they were Canadians – they intended to seek citizenship) - **Adolph** had worked for the Hudson Bay Company). A post office was established at **Pekin** (built on stilts since the area frequently flooded) which operated from 1861 to 1886 - **Fred Lewis** was Postmaster for a year in 1873-74. Other bottom land settlers came including a **Columbia Lancaster** and **Squire** and **Milly Bozarth** - **Fred** would marry a **Bozarth** daughter, also named **Millie**, in 1857 and they had seven children born between 1858 and 1879.

The **Donation Land Act** was intended to spur migration into the sparsely populated Oregon Territories and took effect on September 27, 1850, granting 320 acres of federal land to white male citizens 18 years of age or older who resided on the property on or before December 1, 1850, it was later extended to 1855. Under the 1854 extension of the act, land was no longer free but could be purchased for \$1.25 an acre. It was a predecessor of the Homestead Act of 1862.

In the 1880 Census the town was called **Lancaster**. By 1874, a number of small mills furnished lumber in **Woodland** from logs floated down the river. Homes were being built, and new settlers were coming. Though the Lewis platted and sold a few lots. Nearby in 1881, on the **Bozarth** claim, "**Woodland**" was founded around a store founded by **C. C. Bozarth** which he named after his father's farm. A post office was established and the town started growing, it was platted in 1889, and **Woodland** was incorporated in 1906. **Emmer** may have been boarding with the Lewis family, but it is possible he was doing more than farm work, he may even have been building houses. Fred had plenty of sons - and his farm wasn't that big. There are similarities with **Ferndale**. **Woodland** would become eventually become a center for dairy, butter and Cheese.

Emmer Homesteads in the Uncompahgre

Roy Nichols says "*Emmer homesteaded the old house down by the river and proved out on it I think in 3 years. He then homesteaded the 160 acres where the house was, then another 120 acres south of the first 160.*"

According to the History of Colorado's article on him, "*Emmer D. Nichols, a farmer and apiarist of Montrose County . . . In 1882 he came to Montrose county, Colorado, and took up his abode upon a farm of one hundred and sixty acres, upon which he resided until 1898, but retained the ownership of the property until 1906, when he sold the place. He took up a homestead of one hundred and sixty acres, of which he improved and cultivates forty acres, and is now engaged in general farming, bringing his fields under a high state of cultivation.*"

As the articles say, it appears that **Emmer** homesteaded two different places, and at different times. The first homestead was on the Uncompahgre River, in 1882, close to those of his cousins, the **Rosses** and **Gus Frost**. A log cabin was built, fields cleared, and ditches dug as his place was “under the ditch,” drawing irrigation water from the river. **Emmer** probably supported himself doing work in the area until the first crops came in. Roy says he built the first house built with sawn lumber in **Montrose**, he just might have. There was a lot of construction going on in Montrose – and much of it was in brick! **Emmer's** initial acres were located near where present day Gunnison Road crosses the Uncompahgre River, East of the High Mesa and North of Ida Road. **Gus** was to the East, **Lewis** and **Jay J Ross** to the South.

The Bureau of Land Management shows Serial Patents issued for Montrose Sec #'s 3, 5, 27, 33 & 34 all issued on August 14, 1890 for **Gus Frost** (160 Acres), **Emmer Nichols** (160 acres) **Jay J Ross** (40 acres) and Sec #3 (118 Acres) and **Lewis Ross** (160 Acres). There were also patents issued nearby to **Amos K Frost** (Gus' father) (160 Acres) on July 13th, 1889, **Elmer Ross** (158 acres) on April 4, 1890, **Eleanor Ross (Lewis and J. Jay and Elmer's mother)** (78.86 Acres) on April 1, 1892 in her name as **Elmer** was too young to file on it himself, and to **Annor A Nichols** (Emmer's mother) (80 Acres) on March 20th, 1895, this land may have been purchased from **Gus Frost** and adjoined **Emmer's** property.

Emmer like the **Rosses** probably started growing produce for the mining communities along with grains and barley. Potatoes soon were found to be a very profitable crop. Crop rotation was practiced. Alfalfa was a very profitable field crop, unlike alfalfa grown in more humid climates, western slope alfalfa would grow two and half to four feet high, sparsely leafed its stems made very nutritious feed for livestock and producing three cuttings a year. The root systems penetrated deep; added nutrients to the soil. Putting up feed for the winter became an important part of ranching in Western Colorado.

Emmer's Bees

Roy says: *“Emmer also got in to the bee business, I don't know why or how.”* The History of Colorado says: *“He has also made a specialty of bee culture and now has over three hundred stands of bees. He has come to be regarded as one of the leading apiarists of the valley, thoroughly understanding the care of bees in every particular and the honey production which his hives yield makes the business a very profitable one.”* Nelly Devine commented in her 1892 letter to Agnes: *“I hope Emmer is getting on well and making money as fast as his Bees make honey.”*

Perhaps **Lewis** and **Emmer** got it started, but it was **Emmer** that made it a profitable business for many years. **Emmer Nichols**, and his son **George** became prominent **Apiarists**. **George** continued in the Honey business – he was an Apiarist in the 1910 Census, the Montrose County Bee Inspector by 1914, and continued in the business after his service in France in WWII till after he retired. We will say more about this.

Large numbers of bees were needed for the production of alfalfa seed and for pollinating fruit trees, and honey was in demand. The dry climate was ideal for bees and there was lots of alfalfa growing nearby which made fine honey. Bees follow a natural cycle of growth, beginning in the Spring, reaching peak of production in around May, as the flora produces the pollens used to make honey. The Bee boxes located nearby have space for the bees to build combs to fill with honey, while allowing the keeper to extract the surplus in late summer without disturbing the colony. The bee keeper uses smokers and protective clothing as he tends to the hives. Key factors are timing that extraction and managing any swarms, increasing colonies. It takes many years of learning and experience to be able to manage all these aspects successfully. Apparently **Emmer** had a knack for this, and passed it on. Extracting the honey from the combs involved uncapping the combs, removing the honey with a centrifugal device, filtering it into storage containers-- heat helped it to flow – the **Nichols** used large galvanized metal cans. **Emmer** continued in the Honey Business until he left for California in the 1920's. He was Secretary of the Bee Keepers Association in 1899.

Emmer Nichols was elected twice as County Assessor and is listed as such in The Colorado State Business Directory of 1899. **Emmer Nichols** was first elected and installed as the County Assessor in 1896 and served a couple of terms in this office, an indication of his respect by the community. An involvement in politics is not surprising since his father regularly registered to vote wherever he resided. The County Assessor was responsible for discovering, listing, classifying, and assessing the value of all real and personal property within the County. This office was also responsible for maintaining accurate public records, including ownership records and maps of all parcels. Which must have been challenging work in an area where homesteaded parcels often had to be adapted to surveyed lines.

It seems that the **Nichols** family moved into **Montrose** around 1898, and into a house he built in 1903. **Emmer** built a number of other houses in **Montrose** – **Roy** says there were five, and several are still in use - including the **Nichols** home which has been added onto, and recently sold in 2011 for \$115,000. One house he built was of block construction. They were still living in Montrose in 1912 (F.A. McKinney's Montrose city and county directory, 1912).

Emmer apparently decided to homestead another 160 acres on the High Mesa. He may have been anticipating the coming of additional irrigation on the dry Mesa lands along the River. The **Gunnison Tunnel** was first proposed in 1901, work started in 1906 and it was completed in 1909 – though it took a number of years to divert water onto the mesas. If Roy is correct about the “new” farm house being built with scraps from **Emmer's** and **Gus'** Saw Mill – which they started around 1904-06, then it may have been about or after that time he homesteaded the second place and started building the required “residence” and making the improvements on it. There is a BLM Land Patent for **Emmer** issued in 1922 for 160 acres.

Since **Emmer** and family were living in Montrose, by that time, in a brick house he built in 1903 on the corner of 2nd and Mesa, it makes sense that the farm house on the new place was “cobbled together.” His bee yard operation was there. We don't know when he got his first Model T, but he clearly had automobiles in his latter years.

Roy describes the new place *“I was born on a farm, 4 miles south of Olathe, Colo. On Feb. 18, 1926 in an old farm house my Grand father Emmer Darwin Nichols had built. The Old house that us kids were born in was built of sawed lumber from that old saw mill, I think that they used the old slabs that they could not sell to build the house. The foundation was made from big rocks and then they laid some big logs on the rocks and built the house on top of the rocks, At least it started to settle while we were living there. Really was not that bad a home the floor sunk and the roof leaked, but we had a walk in cellar and running water at the kitchen sink and in the bath room, also a flush toilet. Dad [George] hauled the water for drinking from Olathe, but they just ran ditch water in the other cistern As they had built 2 cisterns.”*

Emmer's Civic Activity

Emmer served as Secretary for School District No. 2 for 20 years – The Frost School – where his children attended. It was located on present day Gunnison Road, West of Hwy 50 just before the curve and the bridge crossing the river. Some of his grandchildren would also attend – George and Helen's “four pennies”

Emmer Nichols, the **Rosses**, and **Gus Frost** were all members of the local *Knights of Pythias* Lodge - The *Knights of Pythias*, founded in 1864, was the first fraternal organization to receive a charter under an act of the United States Congress. A member must be at least 18 years of age. He could not be a professional gambler, or involved with illegal drugs or alcohol and he must have a belief in a Supreme Being. The ideals of loyalty, honor and friendship are the center of the order. Members received swords often marked with "**FCB**," which stands for the Pythian motto "*Friendship, Charity, Benevolence*". The oath also takes a stand against professional gambling, or unlawfully engagement in the wholesale or retail sale of intoxicating liquors or narcotics; and on the maintenance of the order and the upholding of constituted authority in the government.

The mysterious year, 1906

A lot happened that year, and it is hard to sort these out. In February, 1906, the **Nichols** family attended a surprise birthday party for **J. Jay Ross**, but they missed the big **Ross** Family Reunion. They were frequently a part of the extended Ross Family's social life. In April 1906, the San Francisco Earthquake happened. In 1906, **George** graduated from Montrose County High School. In 1906, **Emmer** sold his first farm, and in December bought 120 acres of timber for the sawmill. In December, **Agnes** gave birth to a son, Alvan who only lived a few days, she was in Los Angeles – we don't know why.

We have pictures of **Agnes** and the younger girls in both **San Francisco** with her sister in law, **Blanche Lawford**; and in **Field's Landing** with **Emmer's** Mother **Anna** probably in 1906 – in neither picture does **Agnes** appear to be expecting, and **Anna** passed away in early 1907. So many unanswered questions about that year!

Emmer and Gus' Sawmill

Emmer went into the sawmill business with **Augustine “Gus” Frost** some time after 1904. The forested regions attracted enterprising lumber companies during the 1890's and after the turn of the century according to Frontier in Transition. The 1934 interview by Arthur W. Monroe of the *Colorado Historical Society* says the Sawmill Partnership began in 1904 and lasted 15 years. The mill was first located above Colona, and moved a number of times - Sawtooth, head of Dallas Creek, Log Hill Mesa and other places – Roy mentions a 25 Mesa and California Mesa. It appears to be steam powered, and would need to be close to a water source. It was a summertime operation, the mill was moved a number of times, and the lumber taken out by wagon. Nettie Frost and some nieces often cooked for the crews – Gus knew the value of well-fed help. Gus made a trip to Cuba in 1909, and bought some equipment for the mill and had it shipped it to Colorado, according to Roy.

Land Patents were issued to **Emmer Nichols** (120 Acres) on December 17th, 1906, to **Agnes M. Nichols** (120 Acres) on same area on December 15th, 1910, to **Gus Frost** (160 Acres) on September 21, 1911, and to **Nettie Frost** (120 Acres) April 17th, 1915. This property was all located up in the mountains where Ouray, Montrose and Gunnison Counties come together. It is steep, forested terrain about 10,000 in elevation near a point named Castle Rock on the Google map. **Emmer's** purchase seems to correspond to the year of his sale of his original farmland in 1906. The lumber business became “dull” in 1919, according to Gus in his 1934 interview, and they gradually got out of it. Farming, bee keeping, sawing lumber – how did **Emmer** manage all this? **George** was probably running much of the bee business by this time, but Emmer must have been pretty busy.

The Gunnison Tunnel

Roy says “*He (**Emmer**) worked on the Gunnison tunnel that brought water from the Gunnison River to the Uncompahgre River so that they could raise crops there.*” But what he did we don't really know.

The longest irrigation tunnel in the world when it was dedicated in 1909, Colorado's **Gunnison Tunnel** was an engineering marvel. The 5.8-mile tunnel cut right through the sheer cliffs of the famed **Black Canyon**, taking water from the Gunnison River and funneling it to the semiarid Uncompahgre Valley to the west. In 1901, the State of Colorado appropriated \$25,000 to start the tunnel, but only 900 feet were driven before funds ran out.

The next year, after Congress passed the Reclamation Act of 1902, the project moved forward again. It committed the Federal Government to construct irrigation works--dams, reservoirs, tunnels, and canals--to irrigate arid and semiarid lands in 16 western states and territories, including Colorado.

With the formation, in 1903, of an association of landowners obligated to pay back the government's cost of construction, the **Gunnison Tunnel** (part of the Uncompahgre Project) became one of the first five projects undertaken by the new **Bureau of Reclamation**. The undertaking proved difficult and gargantuan. Although as many as 500 men were employed with good pay, few rarely stayed on the job for more than a few weeks. Many workers, some with families, lived near the West Portal in a temporary town called **Lujane**. At the other side of the mesa, clutching the slopes of the canyon, a community named **East Portal** also thrived. Both towns had amenities, including a dining hall, school, hospital and post office. It had a dramatic impact on the Uncompahgre Valley. It would bring **Elsie's** future husband to the area, along with his father who lost a leg during the construction.

By 1923, the valley's population had doubled to more than 6,000, and its irrigated acres mushroomed from 37,000 acres in 1913 to 64,180 acres in 1933. We know that **Lewis Ross** was on the local board Association for the Tunnel. It just may have attracted **Dr. Albert Froom** from Chicago with his family to the area to provide medical care. But we will get to him a little later. **George** would later be "a ditch rider" – managing the flow of water through inspecting ditches and opening and closing the gates of the irrigation system.

In 1909, the **Gunnison Tunnel** was completed, with a big dedication ceremony attended by the President of the United States, Howard Taft. Apparently **Agnes** in her correspondence with her sister **Nelly** indicated a move was being considered, as her sister in England, **Nelly** comments on it in her 1909 letter. "I hope you will be able to get away next winter, but moving a family is no light task, however I hope the Gunnison Tunnel of which you speak, or rather write, will bring about a change in affairs, and enable you to get away. Twenty five years is a long time to be in one place, especially when one is no older than you are."

There are two businesses that **Agnes** had a part in. **Emmer** built the Olathe Greenhouse – which had to be after 1907 when "Olathe" was incorporated under that name south of **Olathe**. **E. D. Nichols** was the proprietor, but **Agnes** probably managed much of the business for a number of years. We don't know a lot about it.

Emmer probably retired in 1921-2. He was in his mid sixties, and it is said they moved to California because of his health. Nor do we know much about **Agnes'** "Candy Shop," a Confectionery Shop she is pictured in, selling sweets and cigars. It was probably a retirement business for her in California. It was a big step to move so far from family, especially grandchildren. They took **Irva** with them, but left three children and eight grand children behind. Else was in Nebraska.

Emmer Nichols Livelihoods - Photos



Nichols' Home built by Emmer - 2nd and Mesa, Montrose
Elsie and Irva on Donkey - 1904



Emmer's House after remodel - 2nd and Mesa, Montrose
Emmer and Agnes in picture



House built by Emmer Nichols in Montrose



Home Yard of Bees March 1920



Emmer



Model T Ford loaded with 100 Cans and 50 Pails of Honey April 6th, 1921



Gus and Emmer's Saw Mill, Montrose County Colorado



Picnic at the Saw Mill - Agnes (Front left)
Gus Frost (in hat behind her) Emmer (in overalls)



Agnes Nichols in front of Olathe Greenhouse



Agnes Nichols in her Candy Shoppe

Emmer's in-Laws: The Rosses and Gus Frost: Progressive Men of Western Colorado

In 1885, the entire **Ross** family, with the exception of Juliette Marshall, were living in Montrose County. According to the 1885 Colorado Census – on the same page with them are **Emmer**, his new wife **Agnes**, and his mother **Anna**, and both brothers **Charles** and **Earnest** – they may have been visiting to get acquainted with the new Mrs. **Nichols**. A few pages later, **Augustine Frost**, his wife **Nettie**, his daughter and his sixty-seven year old widower father, **Amos** are found. Unfortunately the 1890 Federal Census was destroyed by a fire in 1921 at the Dept of Commerce in Washington, D.C. - that Census might have answered a few questions. But perhaps those questions are answered by the Bureau of Land Management as patents were issued on the land.

When homesteading (Homestead Act of 1862), a settler had to be the head of the household or at least twenty-one years old. They had to live on the designated land, build a home, make improvements, and farm it for a minimum of five years.

It was hard work homesteading. Some kind of lodging would be built – a log cabin with dirt floors, a roof of poles and dirt, a board door. Fields had to be cleared and crops planted. In Western Colorado, summers could be hot and dry, winters bitterly cold and snowy, springtime snow melt could bring flooding. Improvements would need to be made to the land. Food and forage for the winter had to be put up. Sheds, barns or stables and fences built. They had to reside on the land for five years and make improvements. In Western Colorado irrigation systems were important. And they would need money to last them until the crops were ready to sell, which meant they would need to find paying work as well. It was a rugged life for a family – if they could tough it out, they could file for patent on the land and it would be theirs.

The Bureau of Land Management shows Serial Patents issued for Sec #'s 27, 33 & 34 all issued on August 14, 1890 for **Gus Frost** (160 Acres), **Emmer Nichols** (160 acres) **John Jay Ross** (40 acres) and Sec #3 (118 Acres) and **Lewis Ross** (160 Acres). **Emmer's** acres were located SW of where present day Gunnison Road crosses the Uncompahgre River, East of the High Mesa and North of Ida Road. **Gus** to East, **Lewis** and **Jay** to the South. There were also patents issued nearby to **Amos K Frost** (160 Acres) on July 13th, 1889, On Sec #5 to **Elmer Ross** on April 4, 1890, to **Eleanor Ross** (78.86 Acres) on April 1, 1892 – homesteaded in **Elmer's** behalf, and to **Annor A Nichols** (80 Acres) on March 20th, 1895. Related to **Ellen Ross** through her sister, **Marcus, Elmer, Ernest** and **Charles Young** also came to Colorado from Michigan and settled in the **Olathe** area and each were issued patents dated 1890 or 1891. They were located to the West of **Olathe**.

The 1900 Federal Census has **Emmer** and his family, **J. Jay Ross** and his family, **Lewis Ross** and his family and **Gus Frost** all on the same page – indicating they were living in proximity to each other, a few miles south of **Olathe**, Colorado along the river. **Emmer** was keeping bees, the **Ross**'s were farmers. **Gus** was involved in mining, however, **Nellie Frost** is found on another page (5) with her were daughters **Ethel** and **Hazel** and her mother, **Eleanor Ross** (Misspelled).

The **Ross** brothers became quite successful landowners, both farmers and stock men in Western Colorado, and were joined in 1882 by a third brother, **Elmer**. Cousins **Emmer Nichols** and **Gus Frost** were also prominent pioneers in the Uncompahgre Valley. They all started with log shacks and ended up prominent landowners with nice homes. They contributed much to the region contributing progressively developing agriculture and livestock. but they also helped start schools, build roads, and establish other community institutions.

These men each came with to the valley with special skills and some unique talents. **Gus Frost**, always looking for another “opportunity,” inspired them to come. He left his land, poorly chosen, for others to farm for him, while he had his fingers in so many things – mining, hauling freight, banking, mercantile, logging, a sawmill (with **Emmer**), and later, livestock: Holstein cattle and sheep – hard working, often failing, but fun loving, much of the social life in the early community centered around him.

Lewis Ross was the farmer and and an experimenter with crops at high altitude – he tried all sorts of crops, and could grow just about anything. His farm, “under the ditch” from Spring Creek, it is said “never failed with a crop.” He first introduced Alfalfa to the valley, producing three crops of feed a season, all the while enriching the soil. Though potatoes were the most profitable crop, he practiced crop rotation. He brought in fruit trees, planting potatoes between them, till they were ready to bear fruit. **Lew** and **Emmer Nichols** brought in bees to pollinate crops, producing honey as well.

J. Jay was more interested in adventure – with a loan from a merchant, **J. C. Frees** he put together a wagon and team and he hauled **Lew**'s produce to their markets high in the mountains. It was 38 miles from **Menoken** to **Ouray**, and even farther to **Telluride**. He opened a store in **Ironton** on Red Mountain Pass, and then one in **Ouray**. He then hired men to drive freight wagons carrying celery, potatoes, rutabagas, squash and pumpkins, beans, onions, cabbage, tomatoes, and watermelons – luxuries for the miners. He also supplied the hotels, including the Beaumont in **Ouray**. Eventually, he had his own “Gentleman's Farm.”

Elmer Ross was a wild living cowboy, working the cattle camps. With the help of his mother because of his age, he filed on some land on Coal Creek Mesa, at the time arid, though eventually irrigation would come making it valuable. He left Colorado for Oregon about 1910.

The Agricultural Challenges of The Uncompahre Valley

“Montrose features a semi-arid or arid climate. It sits on "high desert" lands in the Uncompahgre Valley of Western Colorado. Summers are hot and dry, while winters are fairly cold and dry as well. Rainfall is scarce, averaging roughly 9 inches of precipitation per year, with some years with even lower numbers. Snowfall does occur during the winter, but snow is usually short lived in this region due to the high altitude and abundant sunshine.” But the region now produces the best fruit crops in Colorado – apples, peaches, pears – irrigation and some “progressive” farmers made the difference.

Stimulated by the promotion and construction of irrigation projects, agriculturalists moved away from dry land farming techniques growing grain like wheat and barley, and began experimenting with a variety of crops on the newly opened lands. The lower valley was ideal for fruit production. Valley hay production, such as alfalfa, and summer grazing in the mountains, had natural advantages over eastern Colorado range conditions, and caused the establishment of a prosperous livestock industry. Chapter 9 of Frontier in Transition: A History of Southwestern Colorado : “*Ranching and Agriculture: The Economic Diversification of Southwestern Colorado*” says the history of ranching and agriculture from 1881 to 1920 then, was characterized by the attempts of ranchers, farmers, lumbermen, and fruit growers to adapt to the requirements of the land and the resources from which they made their livelihood. . . . Pioneer agriculturalists in southwestern Colorado, during the last two decades of the nineteenth century had to answer two fundamental questions as well. Would crops prosper at high elevations, and was there enough water to ensure adequate yields?” Wheat, Alfalfa, Potatoes, Pinto Beans, Fruit trees and later beets were found to be good crops, but they needed water.

The first irrigation project in the Uncompahgre River Valley began in 1882, when **O. D. Loutsenhizer** built a four-mile ditch from the Uncompahgre River to **Montrose**. Finding the **Loutsenhizer ditch** inadequate to meet water demands, the **Uncompahgre Ditch and Land Company** organized and built, in 1883, the **Montrose and Delta Canal**. Its outtake was seven miles south of **Montrose**, and it extended down the valley as far as **Delta**. Numerous ditches were dug further down the Uncompahgre River around **Olathe** and **Delta**, but it was discovered, by 1890, that despite the continued construction of irrigation canals from the river, there was not nearly enough water to meet ever increasing demands. The **Gunnison Tunnel** Project completed in 1909 would finally provide enough water for the valley floor, but also the dry mesas alongside it.

It was in this agricultural Transition that **Emmer Nichols**, the **Ross** brothers and **Gus Frost** found themselves. And they were probably ready for the task, thanks to their varied experiences in California, and their unique personalities. They knew about irrigation and orchards and also hardships.

The book Progressive Men of Western Colorado (1905) had articles on **J. J. Ross** and **Elmer Ross**. They had gone on to become successful farmers and landowners. Another book on the History of Colorado (1917) had articles on **Gus Frost**, **Emmer Nichols** and **Lewis Ross** – it is significant that they are considered “Progressive Men” who adapted to the agricultural needs of the region. The following paragraphs reflect much of the information found in those articles, as well as material in John Manion's book of the Ross Family.

Gus Frost – His Later Years 1882-1938

Gus Frost was described as having “*a hand in everything that marked the building of the empire*” in Montrose. It seems to be a pattern in **Gus Frost's** life that he would not stay with an endeavor for long before starting something else. Mining had a strong pull on him. But after homesteading near **Montrose**, he was involved in a lot of endeavors. In the Fall of 1881, he worked on the D&RGW railroad construction, work was finished in 1882.

Though **Gus'** farm was not very productive – he hired men to work it; his barn was in the early days the social center of the area – a frequently used building for dances. In 1883, **Gus** and his wife managed the *Mears Hotel* (started by **Otto Mears**, the railroad Magnate) in **Montrose**, a two story, rough board structure with canvas sheets for partitions. But there was plenty of gambling going on. He entered into a four way partnership to buy out the General Merchandise store of **J. C. Frees** – this mercantile business continued until 1893. He also transported produce to **Telluride** in freight wagons over nearly impassable roads, hauling ore back – one year he was on the road continuously for 210 days – seven months without a day off.

At the same time, **Gus Frost** and **Nettie** Ross became the parents of four children: after tragically losing their first, **Eugene E.** (1882-83) – **Hettie**, fearing that they might lose their second, insisted they move to the mountains where she lived in a tent until **Ethel** (O'Rourke) (1884-1979) was born. **Hazel L.**(Gordon) (1887-1985) followed, and **Augusta** (1889-90), who also had a short life, dying of Cholera.

Among **Gus'** other interests, he was a director of the *First National Bank of Montrose* when it was first chartered. His contributions to area school will be mentioned later. **Gus Frost** was a member of the Congregational Church, a member of the *Masons*, *The Independent Order of Odd Fellows*, and *The Knights of Pythias*.

In 1893, **Gus** helped organize a farmer's co-operative along with **Elmer Young**, the *Montrose Fruit and Growers Association* – but though a building was built and a railroad switch installed - the “panic of 1893” wiped out all **Gus'** resources, forcing him to revert to mining. He sold off his original land – some of it, including the parcel with the *Frost Switch School* to **Anna Nichols** in 1895, the rest by 1901.

According to the Interview in the Appendix of the Remembering Our Ross Ancestors, **Gus** says he had lost everything in the **Panic of 1893**, and left his family to find a job working in the mines of **Cripple Creek, Gunnison, Lake City** and others in the San Juan Mountains. He was away from his family for months, sometimes years, over a period of eleven years before returning home with his debts finally paid though he was broke. **Nettie** stayed on their property, cared for their daughters and for **Ellen Ross**, her aging mother, and ran a boarding house. In the 1900 Census, **Gus** was involved in mining, and **Nellie Frost** is found on another page (5), with her were **Ethel** and **Hazel** and **Eleanor Ross** (Misspelled), her mother.

After a visit to California in 1904, he returned to Montrose, and soon entered into a partnership with **Emmer Nichols** to operate a sawmill. In the fifteen years they were together, they had their mill on Sawtooth, at the head of Dallas Creek, on Log Hill Mesa and other places. **Nettie** and his nieces would often cook for the crews. The mill was also the location for a number of family picnics. In the early days, Gus hauled lumber out with a wagon. Logging was a seasonal operation. In the BLM patents are four “timbered plots” purchased after 1906 – one each for **Emmer, Agnes, Gus** and **Nettie!**

In February of 1909, **Gus** and **Hettie** made trip to Cuba on the steamer “*Mascotte*” traveling with another Montrose family, the **Lathrop**'s. While there, he purchased some machinery for the mill and had it shipped to Montrose. returning to New Orleans on the “*Excelsior*“. He also made a couple of trips to Mexico about this time.

Around 1912-1913, **Gus** was the treasurer for an obscure and short lived rail road, the *Uncompahgre and Gunnison Valley Railroad*. After the lumber business became dull in 1919 the saw mill business ended. In 1925, Gus established a box factory in **Montrose** making round wooden cheese boxes. This business did not do well either, eventually burning down. So he returning to farming at his “new” place up on the North Mesa raising Holstein cattle and herds of sheep. He and **Nettie** went into semi-retirement about 1929. **Gus** died after a fall down the stairs at the home of his Sister-in-Law, **Juliette Marshall**, in Vacaville in 1937. **Nettie** lived on until 1951. Both are buried in **Montrose**.

His daughter **Ethel** married **Mike O'Rourke** from **Delta** in 1903 – Gus got him employment at the mine in Telluride – leading to a long career in mining all over the world. His daughter, **Hazel** married **Charles Gordon**, who came to work on the Tunnel and stayed, and they lived at **Gus'** house in Montrose, he was a merchant, she worked at the National Bank.

The Ross Brothers 1882-1936

John Jay Ross had over two hundred acres “under the ditch” drawing water from the river for irrigation. His first house was a log cabin with pole and dirt roof and a dirt floor. His gamble claiming land on the Mesa paid out many years later as the **Gunnison Tunnel** brought irrigation to it, though he may have gotten it as the original claims were adjusted to the officially surveyed boundaries. He cleared and leveled the land, cutting out willows and digging out stumps, digging irrigation ditches then planting potatoes, corn and vegetables to sell. But soon he got involved in freighting **Lew's** crops and he married and started a business in **Ouray**. **Lew** probably farmed **J. Jay's** land in return. Their partnership lasted till 1898. **Lew** always had plenty of water from the river, but **J. Jay's** mesa lands didn't get water from the **Gunnison Tunnel** Project until 1919, when various feeder canals and ditches were dug. In 1930, poor crops forced **J. Jay** to mortgage his bottom lands, eventually all he had left were his mesa lands.

J. Jay became the *County Road Overseer*, and he laid out the South River Road from **Montrose** to **Olathe**. Montrose County gradually purchased **Otto Mears' and** other toll roads, and developed those and others to the county's needs. He served as President of the *Montrose Fruit and Produce Association* in 1913, and President of the *Live Stock & Supply Company*. He was prominent in the *West Slope Fairs* and *Pioneers Associations* as well. The fairs did much to promote the agricultural products of the area.

J. Jay Ross was married twice. In 1887, he wedded Miss **Grace Eby** in **Ouray**, where they made their first home, and to them were born three children, **Myrtle, Eby** and **Nelda**. The marriage did not do well, and **Grace** left him and the children in 1895. **Grace** passed away in 1903. **J. Jay Ross** married **Myrtle Bryant** in 1905. She was 27 years younger, a native of Arkansas. They became parents of three more children, **Helen Gladys, Bernice B.** and **Beatrice**, twins. The last named, died after birth.

When **Lewis Emerson Ross** came to Colorado, he worked at mining near **Silverton** for four months, then settled in the **Uncompahgre valley**. He took up one hundred and sixty acres of land by pre-emption eight miles northwest of **Montrose**, and purchased one hundred and twenty additional acres for an extensive farming and stock business. Active in politics, he saw the need of a new county organization and began the agitation that ended in the formation of **Montrose County**, circulating among the people a petition asking the legislature to authorize the division from **Gunnison County** [which took place in February, 1883]. For a number of years, **Lewis E.** was in partnership with his brother **J. J. Ross** in farming – he grew the crops and **J.J.** hauled them by wagon to **Ouray**. They were also in the stock business – it appears they might have broken the partnership up in 1898. He had on his farm fine colonies of bees producing quantities of the most delicious honey – he may have introduced **Emmer** to bee-keeping or the

other way around. **Lewis** served on the first board of directors for the *Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association*, was a member of the board in charge of the **Gunnison Water project**. He was involved in the Stock Association, on the *Opening Day Committee for the Gunnison Tunnel* and organized the *Montrose Country Fair* in 1883.

In 1892, **Lewis** married to **May Dohl**, the daughter of **Lewis Dohl**, a native of Norway who had settled in Montrose in 1886. Three girls blessed their household : **Leila**, **Myrtle** and **Wilna**. **Lewis Ross** cared for his mother till her death in January 1905 at his residence. His daughter, **Wilna**, died at the age of 12 of Rheumatic Fever during a visit to **Vacaville** in 1915, and both she and **Eleanor Ross** are buried there.

J. Jay and **Lewis Ross** passed away withing three weeks of each other in September, 1936. **Gus Frost** passed away in December 1937. They are buried in the Grand View Cemetery in **Montrose**.

Their brother, **Elmer Ross**, remained in the Sacramento valley until 1882, when he came to **Montrose** County [*perhaps*, he had brought his mother and the rest of the family with him as they were all there in 1885], and started an enterprise in ranching and raising cattle, taking up a quarter section of land by pre-emption for that purpose on **Cole Creek** and he added another of eighty acres by purchase. [There is a **Cole Creek** close to **California Mesa**] It was wild sage brush land when he located on it, and produced alfalfa, bed stock and had an orchard. In 1895, he married Miss **Edna Cabon**, of California, a daughter of **J.S. Cabon**, of Oklahoma, who settled on Spring Creek in 1883. **Edna** had been caring for Jay's children when Grace had left him. The couple went to New Mexico for a time before returning to Montrose. **Elmer** and **Edna Ross** had four children, **Lucille**, **Leland**, **Harold** and **Ruple S**. Sometime before 1910, they moved to a farm in **Irving**, Oregon. Despite rough beginnings, it was long marriage lasting till her death in 1933. **Elmer** outlived his brothers.

The Young's

The **Young's** were cousins of the **Ross's** that also settled in the Uncompahgre Valley in the 1880's. **Ellen Ross'** sisters had married brothers – her sister **Rachel** was married to **Elihu Russel Young**; and her sister **Eliza Ann** was married to **Zebulin Young**. The four brothers, **Charles E. Young** (1858-1887), **Marcus F. Young** (1860-1924), **Elmer E. Young** (1865-1943) and **Ernest L. Young** were sons of **Zebulin** and **Eliza Young**. **Elmer** came in 1883 to Montrose and **Marcus** in 1884. **Charles** was a teacher at Montrose's first school – but he died in 1887. **Marcus** had a store in Telluride, where he met and married his wife, Amanda Smiley, in 1884. Later he did business in Montrose. **Elmer** had orchards on Ash Mesa. **Ernest** ran sheep in Utah in the summer – sheep were not popular with the Colorado cattlemen. In the 1900 Census, **Eliza A. Young** appears right after her son, **Elmer**, she must have been visiting because in 1910, she was back in Michigan with her husband, **Zebulin**.

The Schools

Emmer, the Rosses and **Gus Frost** had a lifelong interest in the Public Schools in Montrose County and helped establish the first ones beginning in 1882, even though they did not yet have children to attend. **J. Jay** was on the first school board, and circulated petitions to start *School District Two* which served rural children North of Montrose – eventually becoming the *Olathe School District*. **Charlie Young** was a teacher, and the younger Ross sisters attended. *School District Ten*, in 1885, encompassed the area around **Menoken** and **Emmer Nichols** served as a secretary on its board for many years, and a sister, **Hettie Ross** was a teacher there, she later taught in Denver, and her sister, **Maud Ross**, also became a teacher in Greeley in 1898. The *Frost Switch School* was established in 1888, it was on the present Gunnison Road, just east of the bridge over the river on **Gus Frost's** land. **George W. Nichols'** four children would attend school there. They lived about 4 miles away and road horses to school. **Lew Ross** served for sixteen years on the *Menoken School Board*, and eight on the *County High School Committee* and was president of the *Montrose County Board of Education* in 1912-13. In 1916, a modern building was built at **Menoken**. It still stands at Jay Jay Road and Menoken Road, now used by the *Menoken Christian Church*. Some of the **Ross's** children too, were involved in Education – two of **Lew's** daughters would also become teachers.

The Permanent Homes

Gus Frost's first place had an adobe roof that dripped mud when it rained, but its board floor made it popular for dancing, as did his barn. In 1891, **Gus** built a substantial two story Victorian Gingerbread House with rooms for guests and a parlor and a white picket fence. The **Frost's** were noted for their hospitality. What is striking is how little time, **Gus** actually spent in it. **Nettie** was often left there alone, caring not just for her children and her mother, but the farm as well. The land was sold and they moved into a small house in **Montrose** in 1906 Not a stone remains of **Gus Frost's** House today.

In 1894, **J. Jay** built his fine residence, a historic showplace in the Victorian Style with two complete stories about a mile South of **Lewis'**. It was in part inspired by his visit the previous year to *World Columbian Exposition in Chicago*. It had a center stairway, double parlors, and large dining room and kitchen and three bedrooms upstairs. It had red flocked wallpaper and a Zinc Lined Tub! He also planted a lot of shade trees. Always wanting to be a “gentleman farmer,” **J. Jay** named his house “Willowdale” and his farm “Hawthorne Farm”. On the large lawn were peacocks, guinea hens and bantams. By 1917, it had electric lights, hot and cold water, but still used a privy out back. The house is still there, surrounded by the lawn and shady trees on Jay Jay Road, close to where it connects with the River Road.

Lew Ross built his house about the same time, but it was a basic utilitarian farm house. A white two story clapboard house, kitchen, dining room (used only for special occasions), bathroom, bedroom and living room on the first floor, two bedrooms upstairs reached by a narrow enclosed staircase. No

frills or ornamentation. It was lighted by kerosene lamps, long after electricity was available. It had two large screen porches and no basement. There were large cottonwoods along the road. **Lew** had a big red barn, an irrigation ditch running through the middle four feet wide and running fast, and “hundreds” of chickens and turkeys running loose. Granaries, sheds, a potato cellar, and a garden the size of a city block for both vegetables and flowers. An equal plot held an orchard. The house burned in 1970, and little else remains of other structures – though some trees remain by the road.

Lewis bragged about living on his farm, and he was on his ranch every day, but he did have a nice house built in **Montrose** about 1909, which **Lewis** and **May** lived in till about 1927. It was a large two story, four bedroom, two bathroom house with a large fireplace and an open stairway to the upstairs rooms with a turn around landing halfway up – located in a fashionable part of town - today it is the lovely *Canyon Creek Bed and Breakfast*. Sometime in the mid twenties, **Lewis** and **May** moved back to the Country house.

Emmer Nichols built a number of houses in **Montrose**, some of which are still lived in. His first home was a typical log homesteaders cabin – close to the river. He apparently started another homestead about 1898 up by High Mesa – this house was lived in by **George** and **Helen Nichols** after their marriage until they bought a house in **Olathe** in about 1936, and it appears to be something **Emmer** cobbled together for the sake of the new homestead, which needed a residence and improvements. Roy describes it as built “with scrap lumber from the saw mill,” which makes sense since he had a nice home in **Montrose**, but it was a solid home.

Roy says “The foundation was made from big rocks and then they laid some big logs on the rocks and built the house on top of the rocks, At least it started to settle while we were living there. Really was not that bad a home the floor sunk and the roof leaked, but we had a walk in cellar and running water at the kitchen sink and in the bath room, also a flush toilet. Dad [**George**] hauled the water for drinking from **Olathe**, but they just ran ditch water in the other cistern as they had built 2 cisterns.” **Emmer's** bee yard was there. Apparently he had lot of other buildings too. At one time he farmed about 800 acres, including 80 acres his mother bought from **Gus Frost** around 1893.

Emmer actually built his “permanent” home in **Montrose**, sometime prior to 1904. It was a sensible brick two story on Second and Mesa, There is a picture of it with the younger girls on a donkey, and a later picture after he had added an enclosed porch room, with a deck above it. There is a house similar to it that was built in 1903 currently occupied on that corner, though it has had some further additions, if it is the same house **Emmer** built. Roy says he built five houses in **Montrose** – a number of which are still lived in.

Nichols Family Overview

Josiah Nichols Sr was born abt 1771, and died date unknown. His wife, **Sally Haskins** was born in 1775. Children of **Josiah Nichols** included: **Josiah Nichols**, b. October 15, 1822, Connecticut (or NY), d. February 24, 1907, Fields Landing, Humboldt Co., California.

Josiah Nichols (b. October 15, 1822, d. February 24, 1907)

Josiah Nichols (son of Josiah Nichols and Sally Haskins) was born October 15, 1822 in Connecticut (or NY), and died April 21, 1898 in Fields Landing, Humboldt Co., California. He married **Hanna Anner (Anna) Ross** on March 05, 1856 in Michigan.

Hanna Anner (Anna) Ross (daughter of **Joshua Jay III Ross** and **Hannah Anor Rounds**) was born June 17, 1831 in Stephentown, Rensselaer County, New York, and died February 24, 1907 in Fields Landing, Humboldt Co., California.

Children of **Josiah Nichols** and **Hanna Anner (Anna) Ross** are:

- ◆ **Emmer Darwin Nichols** b. March 25, 1855, Alcoma, Michigan, d. May 21, 1925, Los Angeles, California.
- ◆ **Charles L Nichols**, b. October 03, 1864, Elk River, California, d. October 06, 1936, Fields Landing, Humboldt Co., California. Married **Esther Isabella Atwell** (1884-1969)
- ◆ **Ernest Jay Nichols** b. March 20, 1867, Elk River, California, d. 1951 Married on Nov 4th, 1919 to **Minnie McConnell** (1889-1941)

Emmer Darwin Nichols (b. March 25, 1855, d. May 21, 1925)

Emmer Darwin Nichols married **Agnes Laud Lawford** (daughter of Edward Henry Acland Lawford) on November 30, 1884 in Montrose Colorado, **Agnes Maud Lawford** was born September 12, 1866 in Calcutta, East India, and died April 07, 1928 in Los Angeles, California.

Children of **Emmer Darwin Nichols** and **Agnes Maud Lawford** are:

- ◆ **Alice Violet Nichols** b. December 02, 1885, Montrose, Montrose Co., Colorado, d. Dec 9, 1971. Married **Andy A Woods** (1880-1960) in Feb 28, 1904.
- ◆ **George Washington Nichols** b. February 22, 1888, Montrose, Montrose Co., Colorado, d. Dec 17, 1976, Grand Junction, Colorado. Married **Helen Genevieve Froom** (1888-1969) on Mar 11, 1922 in Chicago Illinois
- ◆ **Harry Lawford Nichols** b. January 28, 1889, Montrose, Montrose Co., Colorado, d. August 30, 1923, Ouray, Colorado. Married **Ada Brown** (1891-1845) on May 14, 1911
- ◆ **Elsie Anna Nichols** b. January 30, 1896, Montrose, Montrose Co., Colorado, d. January 1985, Bell, Los Angeles Co, California. Married **Marion Edward Decker** on Jul 14, 1918
- ◆ **Irva Maud Nichols** b. Sep 30, 1899, Montrose, Montrose Co., Colorado, d. April 1976, Manhattan Beach, Los Angeles Co., California. Married **Ralph R Tedford** on Sept 30, 1925.
- ◆ **Alvan A Nichols** b. December 15, 1906, Los Angeles, California, d. December 19, 1906, Los Angeles, California.

George Washington Nichols (b. February 22, 1888, d. December 17, 1976)

George Washington Nichols (son of **Emmer Darwin Nichols** and **Agnes Maude Lawford**) was born February 22, 1888 in Montrose, Montrose Co., Colorado, and died December 17, 1976 in Grand Junction, Colorado. He married **Helen Genevieve Froom** on March 11, 1922, Chicago, Illinois.. **Helen Genevieve Froom** (daughter of Dr. Albert Ellsworth Froom and Mary Minnie Nellis) was born May 07, 1888 in Chicago, Cook Co, Illinois, and died July 19, 1969 in Montrose, Montrose Co., Colorado.

Children of **George Washington Nichols** and **Helen Genevieve Froom** are:

- ◆ **Lois Jean Nichols** b. Mar 11, 1923. Lois was married to Thomas Pratt (1923 - 1996) 1942-1945 and Kenneth Ivan Smith 1948-1982 (1916 - 1982)
- ◆ **Paul Grant Nichols** b. April 10, 1924, Montrose, Montrose Co., Colorado, d. October 1984, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah.
- ◆ **Roy Earl Nichols** b. Feb 18, 1925 was married to **Bonnie Jean Smith** (1925 -) and to **Stella Maxine Short** (1926-)
- ◆ **Rose Irene Nichols** b. April 5, 1927 d. September 3, 2012 Married to **Forest Thomas McWilliams** (b April 5, 1926 -)

Rose Irene Nichols (b April 5, 1927 d. September 3, 20012)

Rose Irene Nichols (daughter of **George Washington Nichols** and **Helen Genevieve Froom**). She married **Forest Thomas McWilliams** (son of **William McWilliams** and **Estella Irma Wilson**) on July 11, 1948.

Children of **Rose Irene Nichols** and **Forest Thomas McWilliams** are:

Barry Kent McWilliams, William James McWilliams, Forest Thomas McWilliams Jr, and Tina Rae McWilliams.

The Lawfords

Edward Lawford (son of **Samuel Lawford** and **Margaretta Acland**) was born May 16, 1809 in Clapham, London, England, and died May 23, 1871 in Charleton, Kent, England. He married **Diana Lousia Smythe** on March 16, 1828

Edward Henry Acland Lawford (son of **Edward Lawford** and **Diana Lousia Smythe**) was born in England, and died 1873 in San Francisco, California. He married **Ellen Alexandrina Riley** and married on August 26th, 1862 to **Ann Amelia Kayes (b 1842 d. Unknown)** at St. John's Church in Calcutta. **Ann Amelia Kayes** married **E. J. Osborne** in Nevada in 1878 – they were divorced by 1880.

Children of **Edward H. A. Lawford** and **Ellen Aleandrina Riley**

- ◆ **Emily Eliza Clara Lawford** (1859-1943) married **George Fredric Kitton** in 1889
- ◆ **Ellen Rose Louisa (Nelly) Lawford** (1861- unknown) married **Charles Feron Devine** in 1884.

Children of **Edward H.A. Lawford** and **Ann Amelia Kayes**

- ◆ **Violet Alice Lawford,** (-Unknown)
- ◆ **Margaretta Acland Lawford** (-unknown)
- ◆ **Agnes Maud Lawford** (1866 -1928) Married **Emmer Darwin Nichols** in 1880.
- ◆ **William Edward Lawford** (1868-1923) Married **Margaret Blanche** (Peck?).

The Ross's

Joshua Jay III Ross (b. December 17, 1796, d. May 16, 1851)

Joshua Jay III Ross (son **Joshua Jay Ross Jr** and **Thankful Saunders**) was born December 17, 1796 in Westerly Township, Washington Co., Rhode Island, and died May 16, 1851 in Lyons Township, Ionia City, Michigan. He married **Hannah Anor Rounds** (Daughter of **Moses Rounds** and **Hannah Harrington**) on November 03, 1822 in Empire Station, Rensselaer County, New York,

Children of **Joshua Ross** and **Hannah Rounds** are:

- ◆ **Moses E. Ross**, b. 1828, Stephentown, NY; d. July 10, 1875, Dixon, CA.
- ◆ **Hanna Anner Ross**, b. 17 June 1831, Stephentown, NY; d. Feb 24 1907, Fields Landing, CA.
- ◆ **Philander Peter Ross**, b. Sep 2, 1833, Stephentown, NY; d. Jul 25 1911.
- ◆ **Elizabeth Jane Ross**, b. Jan 24 1837, Yates County, NY; d. 3 November 1923.
- ◆ **Mary lucretia Ross**, b. Jun5, 1839, Yates County, NY; d. 1900; m. **Agustus Griswold**, 1 May 1858.
- ◆ **Maria Lucelia Ross**, b. Dec 29, 1842, Yates County, NY; d. 3 June 1914; m. **Peter Ludwick**, 1868.
- ◆ **Maranda Amelia Ross**, b. Dec 29, 1842, Yates County, NY; d. 13 June 1913; m. **Benjamin Brown**, 1864.
- ◆ **Nathan W. Ross**, b. Feb 19, 1845, Yates County, NY; d. Mar 1908.

Moses E. Ross (1828-July 10, 1875)

Moses E. Ross was born 1828 in Stephentown, NY, and died 10 July 1875 in Dixon, CA. He married **Eleanor (Ellen) Watkins** 1853 in Grand Rapids, MI, daughter of **John Watkins** and **Hannah Lewis**. She was born 1834 in Geneva, NY, and died 1904 in Montrose, Colorado.

Children of **Moses Ross** and **Eleanor Watkins** are:

- ◆ **Juliette Ross**, b. 30 July 1854, Cedar Springs, MI; d. 4 June 1938, Vacaville, CA.
- ◆ **Lewis (Lew) Emerson Ross**, b. 3 April 1856, Cedar Springs, MI; d. 2 September 1936, Montrose, CO.
- ◆ **Jay John (J.J.) Ross**, b. 25 February 1858, Ionia, MI; d. 1936, Montrose, CO.
- ◆ **Mary Alnetta (Nettie) Ross**, b. 3 February 1860, Courtland Township, Ionia County, MI; d. 18 March 1950. Married **Gus Frost** 1880
- ◆ **Henrietta (Hettie) M. Ross**, b. 12 October 1862, Ionia, MI; d. 16 April 1951.
- ◆ **Elmer Humboldt Ross**, b. 6 November 1864, Fields Landing, CA; d. 1956.
- ◆ **Stella Selina Ross**, b. 14 February 1869, Vacaville, CA; d. 12 May 1899, Montrose, CO.
- ◆ **Edith E. Ross**, b. 6 January 1872, Vacaville, CA; d. 5 August 1919, Hutchinson, KS.
- ◆ **Maud Ross**, b. 16 June 1875, Rio Vista, CA (or Dixon); d. 6 October 1957, Oakland, CA

The Froom's

Peter Stahl Froom (b February 21, 1823, d. June 2, 1898)

Peter Stahl Froom (son of **David Froom** and **Elizabeth Becker**) was born February 21, 1823 in Prescott, Canada, and died June 02, 1898 in Belvidere, Boone Co., Illinois. He married (1) **Amanda Strong** in 1849. He married (2) **Eunice Elizabeth Albright** on October 30, 1858, (daughter of **John Carpenter Albright** and **Eliza J. White**.)

Albert Ellsworth Froom (b. November 20, 1861, d. March 03, 1935)

Albert Ellsworth Froom (son of **Peter Stahl Froom** and **Eunice Elizabeth Albright**) was born November 20, 1861 in Belvidere, Boone Co., Illinois⁶⁰, and died March 03, 1935 in Belvidere, Boone Co., Illinois. He married **Mary Minnie Nellis** on May 24, 1883 in Chicago, Cook Co, Illinois. **Mary Minnie Nellis** (daughter of **George Klock Nellis** and **Louisa Jane Fish**) was born March 25, 1861 in Dayton, Ohio, and died April 03, 1938 in Belvidere, Boone Co., Illinois.

Children of **Albert Ellsworth Froom** and **Mary Minnie Nellis** are:

- ◆ **Albert Nellis Froom** b. April 16, 1884, Chicago, Cook Co, Illinois, d. August 1973, Portland, Clackamas Co, Oregon.
- ◆ **Marguerite Louise Froom** b. November 22, 1885, Chicago, Cook Co, Illinois, d. August 1972, Tampa, Hillsborough Co, Florida.
- ◆ **Helen Genevieve Froom** b. May 07, 1888, Chicago, Cook Co, Illinois, d. July 19, 1969, Montrose, Montrose Co., Colorado. Married **George Washington Nichols** 1822.
- ◆ **May Katherine Froom** b. November 22, 1889, Chicago, Cook Co, Illinois, d. October 14, 1973, Tampa, Hillsborough Co, Florida.
- ◆ **Edgar Albright Froom** b. July 06, 1892, Chicago, Cook Co, Illinois, d. April 25, 1941, Chicago, Cook Co, Illinois-

The Frosts

Amos Augustine (Gus) Frost (Son of **A.K. Frost** and **Elizabeth C. Frost**) b. 11 April 1852 Ravenswood, VA (now in WV), and died 6 December 1937 in Vacaville, CA. Gus Married **Mary Almeta (Nettie) Ross** on October 28, 1880 in Vacaville, California.

Children of **Amos Frost** and **Nettie Frost** are:

- ◆ **Eugene Frost** b. July 1882 d. September 15, 1883
- ◆ **Ethel Elizabeth Frost**, b. 29 November 1884, Frost Switch, CO; d. 28 June 1979, Montrose, CO.
- ◆ **Hazel Laura Frost**, b. 7 June 1887, Montrose, CO; d. 1 January 1985, Ft. Dodge, IA.
- ◆ **Mary Augusta Frost**, b. 1889; d. 1890.

Barry McWilliams' Research Notes on Our Nichols Family History

This is an exploration of the history of the George W. Nichols family. It is based in part on family story materials collected by Roy Nichols; including material from a couple of old books, and on Genealogical materials gathered by my brother, William J. McWilliams on the Nichols family. My cousin, Paul Michael Nichols has been providing me with a lot of photographs and historical documents that were passed down to him on the Nichols family. It is amazing how much is revealed in photographs. Richard Armerding contributed a lot of Genealogical data on the Ross family on line; as did the book, Remembering Our Ross Family Ancestors by John S Manion Jr written in 1993. I have done a lot of searching through Census and other genealogical material which I have accessed through ancestry.com. To this has been added some guess work of possibilities, with attempts to verify facts when possible. I also have done a lot of googling of places and historical events, searches for maps, etc. Each time I have learned something new. Preparing this narrative of the Nichols family had many surprises! And a lot of cyber-sleuthing!

My first discovery was linking Josiah Nichols and Moses Ross and their families into their multi-generational journeys. And the inclusion of Gus Frost, another fascinating in-law. Having two families to follow gave me a lot more information, helping me to narrow down dates and locations using the birth of children, learning their occupations, etc. But at the same time, it kept opening up more intriguing questions.

Googling the names of towns in Michigan and California provided a lot of interesting information! Until I started this research, I didn't know about the Humboldt or Solano counties!

The 1870 Census – The Ross were in the Vacaville – Silveyville (Dixon) area in Solano County, California. It seemed that the families had split up. But I couldn't find Josiah and family in the 1870 Federal Census anywhere!

The next set of surprises were found in the 1880 Census – Emmer Nichols was in Washington State, His parents in the Humboldt, The Ross's had moved to Sacramento County (Moses died suddenly in 1875), Agnes Lawford was in a mining town in Eastern Nevada with her remarried and divorced mother and her brother. Gus Frost was into mining and listed both with his parents in Colorado Springs and in Ouray – later the the same year he would marry Nettie Ross in Vacaville, California.

The next big surprise was the Colorado 1885 Census. Emmer and his new bride had his mother and brothers with them. The entire Ross family were there in Colorado. And Gus Frost's family had his father living with them. All on the same page!

The next surprise was finding the 1970 Non-population Census for Vacaville and Silveyville showing both Josiah and Moses with farms, combined with finding Josiah's Voter registration found by misspelling his last name as "Nicols" - prior to those findings, I had assumed that the Nichols had stayed in the Humboldt Bay area. Now I knew they were still "traveling" together.

Voter Registrations for Josiah Nichols in Solano County (1877); and Ferndale (1800, 1888, 1892) filled in for the absence of the 1890 Census, which had been lost to a fire in 1931. Josiah is back in the Humboldt, but not building ships. Ferndale was a farming and dairy town five miles inland and Josiah was still described as a farmer. Ferndale was also filled with Victorian, Gingerbread homes – some of which Josiah, and possibly Emmer had a hand in building.

Spotting Napa on a old map of Solano County and realizing its significant location was another break through – Googling revealed even more, including its Silver Rush. Some old maps of Solano County were found.

The 1900 Federal Census has Emmer and Family, J.J. Ross and Family, Lewis Ross and Family; and Gus Frost (by himself) all on on the same page in Montrose.

Then I found some more misspellings: The 1870 Census for Josiah “Nicholas” and his family including “Emmet” was located in Vaca Station/ Vacaville. And Josiah “Nicholas” did have a farm in Ferndale, Ca in the 1880 Non-Population Census. But it was smaller and worth considerably less than the one in Solano County. Possible alternate spellings of the “Nichols” surname include: “Nicols, Nickels, Nickles, Nicholas, Nichles, Nichless, and Nicles”

I was able to find the Land Patents for Emmer, The Ross's and Gus Frost on the Bureau of Land Management Site – and map the locations – just where I thought they would be where Gunnison Road crosses the River near Frost School. Date for these was August 14th, 1890. But wait! There's more! Land was purchased by Gus' Father, The Rosses' mother, even Emmer's mother.

But then a new mystery arises – There are even more Land patents for a location high in the Mountains where Ouray, Montrose and Gunnison Counties met issued to Emmer Nichols (120 Acres) on Dec 17th, 1906, to Agnes M. Nichols (120 Acres) same area on December 15th, 1910, and to Gus Frost (160 Acres) on Sept 21, 1911, and to Nettie Frost (120 Acres) April 17th, 1915.

Then I got the Remembering Our Ross Family Ancestors by John Manion from my brother Bill. Lots of significant info. This book answered some questions, but created others. According to him, Josiah went to California alone, the rest came later. The journey to Solano County by the Ross. The move to Brannon Island and the flood there. Gus's wedding. Jay's trip to Colorado, then Lewis'. Mining, settling on the Umcompahgre, Gus' Saw mill. Still some significant issues. But not much on Emmer and Maud Nichols

I have gotten quite a few pictures from Paul Nichols. One of them was a mystery to Paul and Roy – five Nichols brothers – a birthday postcard signed by Mr & Mrs Raymond Nichols. Didn't take me long to track them down – the five sons of John E Nichols in Avon, New York c. 1910 - a remote possibility they are related through a brother or cousin of Josiah Nichols Sr.

A Michigan Land Conveyance to Lydia Watkins revealed another surprise – Eleanor Watkins Ross had a stepmother! I guess I should append some of this material as well.

I stumbled across Agnes Lawford's sister in the 1880 Census living as an "adopted" daughter of Gilbert and Hannah Douglass in Mariposa, California. There are lots of Census and Voter Registration information on the Douglass' but nothing more on "Marg't Lawford" - she probably married a few years after the 1880 Census and it is a long jump to 1900. I found her mother's marriage information to E.J. Osborne, but nothing more on her, though it is probable that Agnes and she remained in touch.

I got a copy of 100 Years: 1882 – 1982 Montrose Colorado by Dona Freeman, Editor Interesting reading, but only a few mentions of the Nichols in it. It mentions Emmer's installation as County Assessor.

I have also learned a lot about the times – the Panics of 1873 and of 1893. The Brannan Island Flood of 1878. The development of agricultural techniques in the 1870's in California, the agricultural developments in Southwestern Colorado. Ship yards in the Humboldt, etc. And much more, googling along the way. I did quite a bit of research on mining in the San Juans – including finding maps and photos. Old maps for the D&RG with "Colorow," "Frost," "Menoken" on them.

And more photographs from Paul Michael Nichols – including the Saw Mill, the Bee Yards, Houses Emmer built (They were of brick or blocks – I'd expected wood), The Olathe Green House and Agnes' "Candy shop". Of particular interest is the Nichols house in Montrose, picture is dated 1904. Photography Notes: Kodak Brownie cameras first were introduced around 1890's . Popular as opposed to studio pictures starts around that time.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_camera

Paul supplied a picture of Agnes, Elsie and Irva and Blanche Lawford on Ocean Beach, San Francisco. In the background are the Seal Rocks and the "Gingerbread castle" Cliff House (which burned in the fall of 1907). The girls are approximately the same age as in the picture with Anna Nichols in Field's Landing. Anna died in February, 1907. In February, 1906 the Nichols were in Montrose for Jay Jay Ross' surprise birthday party, but conspicuously absent for the big reunion later that year. April 1906 was the San Francisco Earthquake. In December, 1906, Geo W. Nichols graduated that year, Emmer sold his first farm that year, and Agnes' son, Alvan, who lived only 4 days, was born in Los Angeles. Since Agnes doesn't appear noticeably pregnant, these pictures were likely taken in mid 1906, though possibly in early 1907. Why the Nichols were in California in 1906 isn't clear, perhaps checking on the Lawfords after the quake, perhaps the trip to LA had to do with her mother. Also not clear whether Emmer and the boys were along.

Emmer and Agnes and Irva moved to California either late 1921 or early 1922 judging by the photos. George married in 1922 and they had their first daughter in 1923 on their 1st anniversary. In 1923, both Agnes' brother in San Francisco; and their son, Harry died – the latter at the age of 34, suffering a heart attack while changing a tire. Harry left a wife of 11 years and three young children. Ada Brown Nichols, his widow, continued working as a book keeper at the Creamery, and never remarried. She had family in Montrose. The move to LA continues to "puzzle" me – with all those grandchildren in Montrose!!

Paul Nichols sent me some pictures of Emmer's houses. The address I picked up somewhere and Zwillowed it. Emmer's 1903 Family home at 2nd and Mesa is still there and occupied – sold to the current owner in 2011. A wing has been added. I figured out that Emmer' s second homestead was made after

they were living in Montrose and the “farm house” was probably cobbled together from saw mill scraps to meet homesteading requirements.

Looking for pictures of early Montrose, I stumbled on one of the Hartman Bros Auto dealership in Montrose. Rang a bell, Hartman Bros was listed as George Nichols' employer on his draft registration. Perhaps this explains all those Model T's mentioned in his obit. I also found a 1914 booklet on Colorado Bee Inspection that mentions George Nichols by name.

I was curious about Emmer Nichols in the 1880 Census in Lancaster, Cowlitz County, Wa - since I may be poking around there in couple of weeks. He was listed as a laborer in the household of a Frederick Lee Lewis (1834-?). So I started looking for information concerning him. He was one of the first to settle there and one of the founding pioneers of the town of Woodland – though it was called Lancaster in 1881. He had homesteaded under the Land Donation Act. A very interesting study, At the time Emmer was there, there was a lot of building going on. Houses similar to ones he would build.

I got a book on Montrose : Take a Closer Look – A Walking Tour Guide by Cathleen Norman and Marilyn Cox that is quite helpful and has a lot of historical info it it as well.

As I start on George Nichols and his siblings – I find it interesting how life was changing – electricity replacing kerosene, the Gunnison Tunnel, advent of the automobile and trucks replacing horses and wagons. Irrigation, Indian Motorcycles and Model T's were a significant part of George's early working years. He would drive heavy trucks for the Army in France. Returning to Montrose, he would return to the Bee Business, marry Helen Froom, the girl from Chicago and they would raise four children: Lois, Paul, Roy and Rose. They would struggle through the depression, send sons off to war and daughters marry. They bought a home in Olathe, later moved to Montrose. But this story is yet to be added to the narrative – but will be in time.

And we still had some “brick walls” - Josiah Nichols and Sally Haskins. Agnes Lawford's missing sisters. Getting further back on the Wilson family tree, and there are lots more trees to explore. My Brother -in- Law was working on the Gastons, and hopefully the Refsnes' which are Marianne's family. And I need to write up the McWilliams, Wilsons, and other families on my father's side of the family tree. I hope eventually to get this on to the web – with hyperlinks.

Part Two: Skipping ahead to 2019 and an utilizing an Ancestry DNA Test. My Results arrived: **England, Wales & Northwestern Europe 77% Sweden 11% Ireland & Scotland 5% Norway 5% Finland 1% European Jewish 1%** And along with this thousands of matches, new learning curves, and some great new tools!!

The first break-through was the mystery of Margaretta Acland Lawford was solved. She had married and had a son, named after Gilbert Douglas – who with his wife, Hannah Douglas raised her. Turns out they were well to do, and hobnobbed with such as William Randolph Heart's Father, the Stanfords, and John Muir. Hannah's obit exciting. Margaretta was a teacher in Coulterville. But with that match came information revealing a brief marriage in Los Angeles to a Belgian fisherman, Denie Becker and a son named Gilbert Douglas Becker. But it seems also a sudden divorce and then another brief marriage to a much older man in Chehalis, Wa who died soon after!! But her son was abandoned in Portland at the age of three, a note pinned to his chest. He was raised in a foster home, was WWI veteran, and married and fathered quite a few children. Whose children have wondered about his history for years.

While researching this, more information was found on Agnes' mother, Amelia Kaye Lawford and the children's arrival in America in Baltimore, and the death of her oldest sister, Violet and her infant brother, Frances, of measles barely a month later in San Francisco!! The arrival and fate of her father in San Francisco is still unclear.

And the mystery of the Five Nichols Brothers post card was solved! Turns out they were related, but through Moses and Joshua Jay Ross, not the Nichols. A nephew's son married an unrelated Nichols, who had a brother that was the five Nichols grandfather. Discovered in the overlap of two matched trees.

Researching family Trees has become immensely easier with online tools. More recent generations utilize censuses and the paper trail. In the early 1800's it becomes more difficult. DNA matches become helpful, but only to 5th great grand parents. Ancestry introduced in 2019 some New Tools – ThruLines and Matches color coding! (Thanks, Larry Jones for your videos explaining these new tools!!)

There are a lot of family histories and genealogical records for the pre-Revolutionary years. Families were big, with lots of children. Unfortunately, they liked to keep using the same names, generation after generation. With brothers and sisters using the names of their siblings for their children as well. And often several generations staying in the same communities. Sorting them all out is a challenge.

A renewed search for Josiah Nichols began – building several possible family Trees, searching by places, etc. Numbers of Josiah Nichols, none fitting right. I built several possible Nichols trees each with problems. I finally settled on one – though it was for a “Joel Nichols” but I added the names to my tree. And soon the DNA proofs came in matches – shared DNA with a common ancestor: Mary Ely (Joel's mother) and her son, Elisha Ely. A pastor's daughter, she was married to Jonathan Nichols (the third 1732-1790) and I also had a match to Sarah Beach, Jonathan's mother, though one of her sisters! Which took the family line back through two Jonathans to Isaac Nichols, one of the first puritan settlers in Stratford, Connecticut, who came with his father, Sergeant Frances Nichols, and two brothers, from Sedgeberrow, Worchestershire, England in 1639 to escape religious persecution. The Ely's have a similar history with three generations of Richard Ely's in Plymouth, Ma. and Lyme, Connecticut. The eldest Richard Ely (b 1623) was part of that great puritan migration to New England in the early 1600's.

Then came another DNA match surprise: Sally Haskins family tree also emerged. I have DNA match links to a Nathan Haskins (1745-1802) (her father), and to Shadrach Haskins (1722-1770), her grandfather, as well as to them through siblings. The Haskins were also part of that migration for religious freedom, living in Plymouth and Taunton, Massachusetts. Researching their places reveals that Sally was born in 1781 in Savoy, Massachusetts, where Nathan was the founding pastor of the church there. And, however they met and when they got married. Savoy, MA is just 25 miles from Stephentown, New York where Josiah's daughters, Lucretia, Harriel and his son, Josiah Jr. were born!! Another surprise. Sally's mother, Phebe Lincoln was descended from immigrant Samuel Lincoln, a great grandfather of Abe Lincoln's!

I have also been able recently to push the Wilson's back a couple of generations, establish my wife's grandmother's Swedish lineage, and fill out and verify much of the McWilliams, Nichols and Gaston trees.

More is sure to come. Barry McWilliams