

DISCLAIMER

This biography is a rough draft and a work-in-progress.
The research has not been completed, so there may be errors and omissions.

This document lacks 1950 census data.

Please return to Tuscania1918.org in the future to see if a revised and
finalized version is available.

Abbreviations:

b = born

d = died

F: = Find A Grave (www.findagrave.org)

NOK = next-of-kin

TUSCANIA

Nichols, Leslie Lewis
1891 CA – 1923 CA



Leslie Lewis Nichols – “San Francisco Chronicle” 11 Feb 1918 p 2

NICHOLS LESLIE LEWIS		X C 731 908
Pvt 1cl 17 Co 20 Engrs		K
619 Blaboa St San Francisco		A 1 545 128
Calif		
Sn 250 607	Died	T 302 237
Born 11/8/91		R
Enl 12/7/17	Dts 6/12/19	Cl.
		I
U. S. VETERANS BUREAU MAIL AND RECORDS Form 7902--Rev. Sept., 1926		INDEX CARD

<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:WS8B-7XPZ>

ORIGINAL

Interment in the _____ National Cemetery

To—The Quartermaster General, Washington, D. C.

CREMATION

NAME <i>A. S. N. 250, 607</i>	RANK <i>Pfc.</i>	COMPANY <i>17th</i>	REGIMENT OR VESSEL			DIVISION, IF WORLD WAR SOLDIER <i>None</i>
			Number <i>20th</i>	State <i>(State-Calif)</i>	Arm <i>Engrs.</i>	

DATE OF DEATH			DATE OF INTERMENT			GRAVE MARK		REMARKS
Month	Day	Year	Month	Day	Year	Section	Grave No.	Date of discharge and number of Pension Certificate, Disinterments, etc.
Jan	20	1923	✓ July	1	1939	E- East	1342	Hon. Dis. June 12, 1919 <i>Demob.</i> Authority - Tel. from QMG dated June 30, 1939. <i>Enlisted Dec 7, 1917</i>

Shipping point for headstones _____ San Francisco, Calif. (Name of state on headstone CALIF. ✓)

PROCTOR, VT. 8 SEP 1939

Warren L. Pierson
Warren L. Pierson, Asst. Superintendent.

3-2550

2231301

(See Instructions on Reverse Side)

26150750019 8-11-39

Overjoyed to Hear Youngest Son Safe

Mrs. Mary Freeman Nichols, 638 Eighth avenue, mother of Private Leslie L. Nichols, Company E, Sixth Battallon,, Twentieth Engineers, expressed herself as follows:

I expected that Leslie was saved. Never for a minute did I feel that he was lost, although, of course, I worried a little. I am overjoyed to realize that my youngest child is saved. He is 26 years old.

His brave little wife is here. She didn't want to hold him back—he was so eager to go.

Leslie's ancestors have fought in about every war America's been in since its foundation, and we're as bitter as anyone against the Germans. In his last letter, Leslie wrote that he was roarin' to get at the Kaiser."

"San Francisco (CA) Examiner" Monday 11 Feb 1918 p 3

TUSCANIA SURVIVOR TELLS EXPERIENCE IN TRAGIC EVENT

This letter from a survivor of the ill-fated Tuscania, written by Leslie L. Nichols, Company E, 6th Battalion, 20th Engineers N. A., A. E. F., from somewhere in Ireland on February 9th, and just received by his mother, Mrs. M. F. Nichols, and sister, Mrs. C. B. Collins, 1605 H street, gives interesting details of the tragic incident. Nichols' wife lives at San Francisco. Nichols enlisted December 1st and after training at American University, Washington, D. C., was enroute to France with his battalion aboard the Tuscania. Nichols has a warm spot in his heart for the Irish as result of their royal kindness to the survivors. The letter follows:

Y. M. C. A. Military Camp Dept.,
H. R. H. Duke of Connaught.
Feb. 9, 1918.

Dear Folk:

Well I suppose you have been doing a lot of worrying about not having heard from me for so long and then having the Tuscania sunk, but here I am in Ireland safe and sound.

I was on the Tuscania all right and sitting up on my bunk just ready to go to supper when the torpedo struck and all the lights went out. We grabbed our life belts and beat it to our boat stations and lowered away our boats. I was one of 20 who were detailed to lower away boats 14 and 14a and we got them both off in good shape without any confusion, although none of the ship's crew were there to help us or show us how. I was the last man to get into boat 14A. Then we shoved away from the ship and were carried out and under the stern and almost broken to pieces there by the shock.

We finally got clear and then found that we had no lantern and only two oar locks and one bucket and the plug was out of the bottom of the boat. This all happened at about 6:30 p. m. and we sure had some work to keep that boat headed into the wind and waves and keep the water down. I was standing in

the stern in water up to my knees bailing just as fast as I could for five hours until we were picked up by the patrol boat at 11:45.

We were given some hot tea at once and had a chance to take off our shoes at least and half dry out. We were landed at Larne, county of Antrim, Ireland, at about 8 o'clock on Wednesday morning, taken to the main hotels and given a hot meal and then some of the fellows were given dry clothes.

The people of that town and the St. John's Voluntary Aid Society (girls from Canada) surely did treat us fine. They seemed to be passing out coffee, tea, cakes and cigarettes every five minutes. They gave us an entertainment and the town gave us one the following night. Nothing seemed too good for us. You see we were the first American troops that ever landed in Ireland and the people sure gave us some welcome. I gave away what little money I had as souvenirs, and my collar ornaments as well. All that I got away from the ship was my service O. D. suit, a life belt and my sweater. Everything else went down. I did not have a hat or overcoat, but now have a British overcoat and a helmet

and will get a new outfit when we reach the U. S. base.

Friday we left Larne and arrived at Randlestown.* We found about 400 more of the fellows here. That makes about 1,000 here and guess we will join the rest of them tomorrow some time, as I think we will leave here tomorrow morning to go across to Scotland and then take the train for London or somewhere near there.

All of our service records have been lost and we have not yet been paid for January. It is hard to say when we will get our money now. When we get near London I am going to try to get a pass and will go to the northern office and draw a little (a couple of pounds or so) so I can get a new razor and toilet articles. They will probably give it to me there and deduct it from my salary in San Francisco. I will send a cable from there too.

I was told by one of the officers that you would be notified by wire by the Government before the news got into the papers. I certainly hope that they did, but am going to send another one as soon as I can get the price as I am all right and know you will be worrying. Have quite a

cold as a result but it does not amount to anything.

There are only 170 missing today, so I think that we came out fine as a whole. I sure was sorry to lose that fine outfit that I had in my bag, but of course that amounts to very little.

It was sure fine to see the way all of the troops on that big ship acted when we were struck. Some of us shouted to take it easy. There was no confusion or crowding and they came up on deck and went to their proper stations just as if it were only a boat drill. A few boats were capsized in launching because there were no members of the crew around that knew anything more about it than we did. On one boat the rope broke and it dropped into the water.

Well, I can't settle down to write about anything else just yet, but I'll write again just as soon as we get to some half-way permanent camp. After coming through that scrape you can just bet I am leading a more Christian life and say my prayers a little more regularly. I sure did some silent praying while in that boat.

The patrol picked us up over 20 miles from the wreck and they said that we would have been on the rocks and pounded to pieces in less than half an hour more. Surely, I do thank God that I am here and able to write this letter to you.

The people here are certainly the finest that I ever saw in my life

and if any one ever says anything against the Irish in my presence I am afraid that there will be trouble. Well, I am going to close now. With lots of love,

Leslie.

Private Leslie L. Nichols, Co. E, 6th
Battalion, 20th Engineers N. A.,
A. E. F., via New York.

"Modesto (CA) Bee" Friday 8 Mar 1918 p 7

Wife:

PLACE OF MARRIAGE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO		CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS	
CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE TRUE COPY OF ORIGINAL		State Index No. _____ LOCAL REGISTERED NO. <u>363</u>	
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS			
GROOM		BRIDE	
Full Name <u>Leslie Lewis Nichols</u>	Full Name <u>Mery Elizabeth Jeffery</u>		
Residence <u>3229 21st St.</u>	Residence <u>3229 21st St.</u>		
Color or Race <u>White</u>	Color or Race <u>White</u>		
Age at Last Birthday <u>23</u> (Years)	Age at Last Birthday <u>17</u> (Years)		
Single, Widowed or Divorced <u>Single</u>	Single, Widowed or Divorced <u>Single</u>		
Number of Marriage <u>1</u>	Number of Marriage <u>1</u>		
Birthplace <u>California</u> (State or Country)	Birthplace <u>California</u> (State or Country)		
Occupation <u>Fire insurance clerk</u>	Occupation <u>Stanographer</u>		
Name of Father <u>Joseph B. Nichols</u>	Name of Father <u>William T. C. Jeffery</u>		
Birthplace of Father <u>Mess.</u> (State or Country)	Birthplace of Father <u>Pennsylvania</u> (State or Country)		
Maiden Name of Mother <u>Mary K. Freeman</u>	Maiden Name of Mother <u>Louise Van Nostrand</u>		
Birthplace of Mother <u>Michigan</u> (State or Country)	Birthplace of Mother <u>California</u> (State or Country)		
Maiden Name of the Bride, if She Was Previously Married. _____			
WE, the groom and bride named in this certificate, hereby certify that the information given therein is correct, to the best of our knowledge and belief.			
<u>Leslie Lewis Nichols</u> Groom.		<u>Mary Elizabeth Jeffery</u> Bride.	
CERTIFICATE OF PERSON PERFORMING CEREMONY			
I HEREBY CERTIFY that <u>Leslie Lewis Nichols</u> and <u>Mery Elizabeth Jeffery</u> were joined in Marriage by me in accordance with the laws of the State of California, at <u>St. James' Church</u> this <u>Sixteenth</u> day of <u>January, 1915</u> .			
Signature of Witness to the Marriage } <u>Edward H. Papper</u>		Signature of person performing the Ceremony } <u>Michael R. Power</u>	
Residence } <u>1421 Henry St. Berkeley</u>		Official Position } <u>Catholic Priest</u>	
Filed Jan. 18, 1915. <u>E. Godchaux.</u> Registrar County Recorder.		Residence. <u>1086 Guerrero St.</u>	

<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QL41-XM4H>



Now Sole Support of Blind Father and Aged In- valid Aunt

Because two eighteen-year-old boys out on the lonely stretches of the Mojave desert saw life wrong enough to slay a man for his automobile and \$7.50 in money, a widow who has known years of sheltering care in her own happy home is now facing the world alone and wresting from it a livelihood for herself, a blind father and an invalid aunt.

She is Mary E. Nichols, 25, widow



Mrs. Mary E. Nichols, widow of Leslie Nichols, who was slain on Mojave desert last month, and who has obtained employment for the support of her family.

of Leslie Nichols, the San Franciscan who was so brutally shot and stoned to death last month by the two youths, whom he picked up afoot upon the desert.

Five weeks ago Mrs. Nichols was in Los Angeles awaiting her husband's return from his trip through the southern end of the State, where he was employed as an adjuster of automobile losses. The young couple were to meet on January 16 and celebrate their eighth wedding anniversary. The 16th came and went, but with it Nichols came not. Instead, he lay dead upon the desert, where his body was not found until a week later.

In these brief five weeks since tragedy entered the modest Nichols home at 619 Balboa street, where the wife, her sightless father and sick aunt lived, safe in the protection of Leslie Nichols, the head of the household. Mrs. Nichols has gone out into the maelstrom of business and obtained a position,

so that she can care for her little family.

Her first step in picking up the thread of life and "carrying on" was to take the State Civil Service examination for clerks and stenographers. Here she was successful, and successful to such an extent that her name ranked among the highest, and she was cited for a place immediately.

From several candidates she was chosen by Will J. French, chairman of the California Industrial Accident Commission, to fill an important vacancy upon the commission staff.

"To give up crushed by my sorrow? That is what many folks thought I would do," she smiles bravely over her typewriter. "But that is not what Leslie would want me to do, or what I should do. I have my people to care for, and I am happy in doing it. Work is the great curative for grief, and in my work I am 'carrying on' for my husband."

"San Francisco Chronicle" Wednesday 14 Feb 1923 p 3 -

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/27619899/?terms=%22leslie%20nichols%22&match=1> AND
https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/79035473/person/352000692730/media/098b86cc-8197-466d-8064-e5ebc611c704?_phsrc=hFB39708&_phstart=successSource

State to Employ Desert Victim's Kin

Mrs. Mary E. Nichols, widow of Leslie E. Nichols, local insurance adjuster, who was slain by two youths in the Mojave desert a month ago, has returned from Los Angeles to her home, 619 Balboa street, this city.

Nichols was crossing the desert on his way to Los Angeles to meet his wife and celebrate their wedding anniversary when he met two young men to whom he gave a ride in his automobile. They attacked and killed him after robbing him.

Mrs. Nichols recently passed a state civil service examination and has been assigned to a position with the California Industrial Accident Commission.

"San Francisco Examiner" Wednesday 14 Feb 1923 p 17

Father:



father Joseph Brayton Nichols - <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/8504936/person/-646061899/media/94def3cf-24fe-48a3-a35d-8b18a40b2857>

NICHOLS—In this city, October 23, 1900, Joseph B. Nichols, beloved husband of Mary F. Nichols, a native of Fall River, Mass., aged 56 years 3 months and 6 days.

“San Francisco Call” Thursday 25 Oct 1900 p 11 - <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/8504936/person/-646061899/media/6407a354-4af1-4086-bc69-74bc69d36580> and <https://www.newspapers.com/image/78276145/?terms=%22nichols%20joseph%22&match=1>

MARRIAGES.

At Benicia, Dec. 25th, Joseph B. Nichols to Mary Freeman.

“Sacramento (CA) Bee” Saturday 5 Jan 1867 p 3

Mother:



Mother Mary Kimball Freeman Nichols – Find A Grave 8706083

Siblings:

MASON—In San Francisco, June 21, 1938, Mrs. Clara Nichols Mason, formerly of Benicia, sister of Mrs. Cecil Stewart, San Francisco; Mrs. Hattie Simpson, Redlands; Mrs. Bertha Owens, Redlands; Mrs. John Murray, Suisun Valley; J. G. Nichols and Ray L. Nichols, San Francisco, and Oscar Nichols, Fresno. Funeral services were held.

Obituary of sister Clara Nichols O'Connor Collins Mason (1869-1938) – “Sacramento (CA) Bee”
Saturday 9 Jul 1938 p 19



Clara Bell Nichols O'Connor Collins Mason - <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/79035473/person/352000692731/media/ca18e66e-cef8-4aa5-9d7a-2cafdc7092ce>

O'CONNOR-NICHOLS.

Thomas O'Connor and Miss Clara Belle Nichols, both of this city, were quietly married at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in San Francisco, August 17th, the Rev. Mr. Lyons officiating. After a short bridal tour, the couple will make their home in Oakland.

Marriage of Clara Belle Nichols to 1st husband, Thomas O'Connor, on 17 Aug 1898 – "Oakland (CA) Tribune" Saturday 27 Aug 1898 p 6

DRANK UP EVERYTHING, SAYS HIS WIFE

Because she says her husband "drank all the liquor he could get," Mrs. Clara N. O'Connor filed suit for divorce against Thomas J. O'Connor alleging further that he deserted her and failed to provide the common necessities of life for her during the time that they lived together. Suit has been filed and the matter referred to the court commissioner. The plaintiff stated that the only time her husband asked her to return to him was when he had been drinking.

Divorce petition by Clara Belle Nichols O'Connor against husband Thomas J. O'Connor – "Oakland (CA) Tribune" Saturday 6 May 1911 p 18

COLLINS—Near Empire, December 5, 1915, Archibald E. Collins, native of California, 39 years old. He leaves a widow, Mrs. Clara B., a father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. B. M. Collins of Oakland, three brothers, Henry T., of Seattle, B. A. of Turlock, Walter G. of Columbia, Washington, and three sisters, Miss S. Collins of Oakland, Mrs. Leandra Langford, Milton; Mrs. W. T. Wood of Washington, Mrs. Samuel Brown of Oregon.

[The funeral will be held at 10 o'clock Wednesday morning from the Brethren church at Empire under the direction of Bowker, Wood & Shannon. Interment will be in the Modesto Citizens cemetery.]

Obituary of Clara Bell Nichols O'Connor Collins Mason's 2nd husband, Archibald F. (not E.) Collins – "Modesto (CA) Morning Herald" Tuesday 7 Dec 1915 p 5



Sister Hattie L. Nichols Simpson (1874-1960) – Find A Grave 27535025

Murder:

MEN HELD ON CONFESSION
RIVERSIDE (Calif.), Jan. 25.—
Frank Campbell and Charles Davis,
the former a few days ago dis-
charged from one of the U. S. de-
stroyers at San Diego, are under
arrest here. It is alleged they con-
fessed to the murder of Leslie L.
Nichols of Los Angeles. *

"Fresno (CA) Bee" Thursday 25 Jan 1923 p 1

HUNT FOR BODY OF MAN SLAIN ON DESERT
WATCH OF MISSING MAN FOUND
IN SHOP AT SAN BENARDINO
BY RYAN, RIVERSIDE SHERIFF
Officers Searching Barren Wastes Near Niland for
Body of Leslie L. Nichols, the
Supposed Victim

INSURANCE AGENT IS VICTIM OF MURDER

YOUNG MEN TAKEN AT BLYTHE CONFESS TO RIVERSIDE OFFICERS

RIVERSIDE, Jan. 26.—The finding of a watch which belonged to Leslie L. Nichols, missing special agent of the Northern Assurance Co., of London, and the statement of Mrs. Nichols and a representative of the Northern Assurance Co. that Nichols had been missing since Jan. 19, today tended to corroborate the confession of Frank Campbell and Charles Davis at Riverside that they murdered Nichols. The 18 year-old youths said they sold Nichols' watch in San Bernardino for \$7. Sheriff Ryan found it in a shop there.

Riverside officers today searched the desert in the vicinity of Niland for the body of Leslie L. Nichols, a special agent of the Northern Assurance company of London, who, according to a confession made yesterday by two men arrested in Riverside county, was slain by them.

Beyond the fact that Nichols has been missing for several days, the confession of the men remained uncorroborated today, but it was believed that the body would be found somewhere in the desolate sand wastes.

The prisoners, Frank Campbell and Charles Davis, who were arrested at Blythe on a charge of stealing two automobiles were taken to the vicinity of Niland to point out the scene of the alleged murder.

Campbell and Davis made their confession voluntarily, it was stated, and before any suspicion of murder attached to them. They said that they shot Nichols and then beat him to death with stones and buried the body in the sand. They offered to point out the spot to officers. Today's expedition to the desert was organized as a result of their promise.

Nichols, it was stated, was engaged in tracing stolen automobiles insured with the company he represented when according to the prisoners, he was slain.

Campbell was recently discharged from the navy, it was stated, having been a member of the crew of one of the destroyers at San Diego.

"Colton (CA) Daily Courier" Friday 26 Jan 1923 p 1

YOUTHS CONFESS TO SLAYING OF INSURANCE MAN

MAN LOOKING FOR ONES WHO
STOLE MOTOR IS SHOT
AND STONED

LOS ANGELES, January 25.—News of the alleged confession by two young men, now in the Riverside county jail, that they had killed Leslie Nichols of Los Angeles, a special agent of a London insurance company near Ogilby, in Imperial county, was received here tonight from several sources.

Riverside advices stated that the men, who gave their names as Frank Campbell and Charles Davis, had been arrested at Blythe on charges of stealing an automobile, and, upon being taken to the jail at Riverside, told of having shot and stoned Nichols to death. They were said to have stated that they threw the body into the brush near Ogilby. Nichols was tracing stolen machines in that region recently, according to his employer.

“Redding (CA) Searchlight” Friday 26 Jan 1923 p 1

SEARCH DESERT FOR VICTIM OF SLAYING

(By United Press Leased Wire)
RIVERSIDE, Jan. 26.—Sheriff Sam Ryan and Deputy Sheriff F. H. Labarron left Riverside this morning with Frank Campbell and Charles Davis for Niland, in Imperial county, the scene of the murder of Leslie L. Nichols, whom Campbell and Davis say they murdered and robbed on the afternoon of Saturday, January 20, according to the authorities.

The murder, according to the boys, was committed at a point twenty-five miles southeast of Niland. The two were hiking from Niland to the Imperial valley. They asked Nichols for a lift and he took them into his car. Some distance out of Niland, one of the men asked for a drink from the canteen. Nichols stopped the car. The two got out, flashed a

gun in Nichols' face and then forced him to walk a mile or so from the highway. There they claim they shot him three times. The bullets failed to kill Nichols and the boys say they beat him to death with stones.

After killing Nichols, Campbell stripped his body and appropriated his clothes. They drove the car to Blythe and were heading for Arizona when arrested at the Ehrensburg ferry by Labarron on suspicion of having a stolen automobile. The arrest was followed by the alleged confession of the two highwaymen.

"Santa Ana (CA) Register" Friday 26 Jan 1923 p 8

BOYS CONFESS SLAYING AGENT

*Body Hid in Desert Under
Rocks, Police Say*

*Victim Was Insurance Man
Here, is Report*

*Sheriff Going to Imperial
Valley to Investigate*

A pile of rocks on the desert hide the body of Leslie L. Nichols, Los Angeles insurance agent, who was shot and then stoned to death by two 18-year-old boys, according to a confession said to have been made at Riverside yesterday by Lawrence Campbell and Charles Davis.

The two youths were arrested at Blythe on suspicion of having stolen an automobile. Grilled by Sheriff Sam Ryan and Dist.-Atty. Loyal C. Kelly of Riverside county, they broke down, dispatches state, and told the story of the murder. Campbell said that he had been discharged a week ago from the U.S.S. Mervine 322, naval submarine destroyer at San Diego.

The murder is supposed to have been committed twenty-five miles north of Niland, which is at the entrance to Imperial Valley. According to the asserted confession, the two boys shot Nichols and, failing to kill with the bullet, threw stones at him until he died. Then they heaped rocks over the body and continued on their way.

Sheriff Ryan leaves this morning for Imperial Valley with Campbell and Davis to have them point out the spot where the murder occurred. Imperial Valley officials are also investigating the case, since it is not known whether the crime was committed in Riverside or Imperial counties. Niland is the town furthest north in Imperial Valley.

Nichols is believed to be a special agent for the Northern Assurance Company, H. W. Hellman Building. Efforts to get in touch last night with G. Mueller, the company's agent, failed. At his residence it was stated that he was out of town, and would return today.

"Los Angeles Times" Friday 26 Jan 1923 p 4

TWO YOUTHS ADMIT DESERT MURDER AND AUTOMOBILE THEFT

Arrest of Pair at Riverside
Said to Solve Death of
Insurance Man.

RIVERSIDE, Jan. 27. — The nude body of Leslie L. Nichols, murdered Los Angeles insurance man, has been found in a lonely spot in the desert, half buried by sand.

Frank Campbell, 18, and Charles Davis, 18, who told officials that they had killed Nichols after he had given them a lift in his machine, led officers to the spot, about a mile from the road.

The body was stripped of its clothing, and badly mutilated by stones and bullet wounds.

Clothes Taken.

Beside the body was found a discarded sailor suit, which had been worn by Davis, and which he had cast away when he stripped Nichols' mutilated body of its clothes and appropriated them for himself.

At the point of a gun Nichols had been forced by the two boys to tramp through a mile of sand to face his death.

Near County Line.

The body was found a few yards over the Riverside county line in Imperial county. Although the code is said to provide that a crime committed within five hundred yards of any county line is punishable in either county, it is declared probable that the two youths will be taken to El Centro and the murder charge filed against them there.

Robbery was the motive of the murder. Nichols' watch was found in a San Bernardino pawn shop. The boys had taken Nichols' car and headed for Arizona with it. They were arrested while trying to cross in the Colorado river ferry on suspicion of transporting a stolen car into another state. When questioned, they confessed to the murder, police said.

"Long Beach (CA) Press" Saturday 27 Jan 1923 p 2

Youths Arraigned For Slaying Insurance Man

EL CENTRO, Jan. 27.—(AP)—Frank Campbell and Charles Davis, each 18 years old, were arraigned here to-day on a charge of having murdered Leslie L. Nichols, insurance man of San Francisco and Los Angeles, whose body was found last night on the desert, twenty-five miles northeast of Niland, a few feet south of the Riverside County line.

The body was brought here and the coroner announced an inquest would be held soon.

Confessed Crime.

Campbell and Davis, arrested in Blythe on charges of stealing an automobile, later confessed in the Riverside County jail that they had slain Nichols, officers stated, and volunteered to go with searching parties to show where they had left the body.

There were said to be two bullet wounds in the body, while the head had been crushed, as with rocks.

Boy Slayers Relate Vivid Murder Tale

(By Associated Press)

EL CENTRO, Jan. 27. — Charles Davis and Frank Campbell tonight told all the details surrounding the slaying of Leslie Nichols, insurance salesman, on the desert.

Davis, who said his home was in Birmingham, Ala., testified that when he and Campbell left the automobile in which they were riding with Nichols, the latter having offered them a lift as they tramped over the desert road, Campbell drew a revolver and ordered Nichols to throw up his hands. When he refused, Davis said, Campbell shot him through the stomach, then forced him to walk across the sands to a place where he was finally dispatched with stones and a bullet through the head. Nichols' slayers took \$7.50 from his pockets, it developed at the inquest, but overlooked a \$20 bill.

Left: "Sacramento (CA) Bee" Saturday 27 Jan 1923 p 13 – Right: "San Bernardino (CA) County Sun" Sunday 28 Jan 1923 p 1

Story of Murders Related to Jury

EL CENTRO, Jan. 27.—Details of the slaying of Leslie L. Nichols, insurance man of San Francisco and Los Angeles, on the desert 25 miles northeast of Niland, were related to a Coroner's jury here today by Charles Davis, 18, and Laurence C. Campbell, 17, each of whom accused the other of shooting Nichols, but both of whom admitted helping to stone him to death.

"San Francisco Examiner" Sunday 28 Jan 1923 p 6

BOYS COMMIT ATROCITY

Two mere boys in age are confessing, without remorse, committing one of the most brutal murders in the history of this state. Leslie L. Nichols, a traveling insurance adjuster, was slain and robbed in Imperial County, by these boys while he was in the act of befriending them. One of these youths is from Alabama, the other from Michigan. Their show of bravado and hardened conscience is frightful.

They should be tried promptly, as is planned. If the murder is proven against them beyond reasonable doubt—their confessions and the proof already gathered seem to be conclusive—they should be convicted promptly and punished as the horrible crime they have committed deserves. There should be no maudlin sentimentality about it, which might encourage other youths to follow their atrocious example.

In connection with such a horror as this, however, it is in order for the people of this country to take stock and to consider whether or not society is partially to blame for such shocking criminality in mere boys. If the childhood environment of these two were inquired into, and if the kind of associations they were allowed to make, and the kind of influences that were exerted over them were fully known and taken into consideration, it doubtless would be found that society has been remiss in not doing its full duty in protecting these and other youths against vicious influences.

This is not said to mitigate the crime or to arouse morbid sympathy for these two young murderers. They were old enough to realize the enormity of the offense they were committing. They should be held to strict accountability for their outrageous offense. But the public should bestir itself to remove vicious influences from the young, and to instill moral principles into boys and girls. There should be moral training in homes and schools.

"Long Beach (CA) Press-Telegram" Wednesday 31 Jan 1923 p 28

BAD LUCK FOLLOWED MURDERED VETERAN

That bad luck always had pursued Leslie I. Nichols, insurance man of San Francisco and veteran of the World War, who was murdered recently in the desert near Niland, was the assertion made a short time ago to Deputy Sheriff F. H. LeBaron by Mrs. Nichols, the widow.

"We were so happy at Christmas time," she said, "when Leslie was at home and the family had dinner together. But there were 13 at the table and the time-worn remark was made that one of us would be gone before the year was passed."

When the war broke out, Nichols enlisted with the engineers of the Twenty-first division. His crossing of the Atlantic was commenced on the Tuscania, which went down with a German torpedo through her hold, with consequent loss of many lives. Nichols was in the water 22 hours, clinging to drift from the wreck until picked up by a rescue ship. He served on the German front until the signing of the armistice and received almost mortal wounds.

Charles Davis and Lawrence Campbell, both 18 years of age, are in the Imperial county jail, charged with the murder. Following their arrest on a charge of stealing an automobile, they were taken to the Riverside county jail, where they are said to have confessed having slain Nichols. The next day they led the searching party from Sheriff Ryan's office which found the body.

Nichols had been shot once in the abdomen; another bullet had been sent into his temple, and he had been stoned.

Deputy Marshal Harry Kunzman is said to have come near being a second victim of the boys while he was taking them to Riverside county jail in his automobile. Kunzman had both youths in the front seat with him and when far out on the desert he removed their handcuffs. Shortly afterward, the one who was on the outside of the seat requested him to stop as he had seen something along the side of the road which resembled a pocketbook. The driver complied with the request.

"I had a premonition of danger," Kunzman said. "There was something which flashed through my mind instantly that cannot be explained. I hastily reversed and backed past the searcher and kept him in front of the machine until he

stopped. He picked up a revolver, and, walking forward, handed it to me, as I had him covered."

Kunzman says he believes they planned to kill him and make another attempt to escape in his automobile. By slipping up behind the automobile, Kunzman could be shot from the rear before he realized their purpose.

"Banning (CA) Record" Thursday 8 Feb 1923 p 8

EL CENTRO BOY ADMITS MURDER

*Young Davis Pleads Guilty to
Slaying Insurance Man*

*Companion Refuses and Asks
Trial by Jury*

*Asserts Other Youth Fired
Fatal Shots*

[EXCLUSIVE DISPATCH.]

EL CENTRO, April 9.—Charles C. Davis, 17 years of age, pleaded guilty in Superior Court today to the murder of Leslie Nichols, an insurance adjuster, on the desert near Niland last January. Lawrence C. Campbell, 18, jointly charged with the Nichols murder, declined to follow the course of Davis and a jury was being selected for his trial today.

Superior Judge Franklin J. Cole announced that sentence would be passed on Davis next Friday. The plea of Davis today was in accordance with the advice of his attorney, Wilbur W. Randall, who had requested a separate trial for his client and was refused it by the court. According to his attorney, Davis is admittedly counting on the operation of Section 190 of the Penal Code, amended in 1921 to prevent the hanging of persons under 18 years of age at the time of committing murder.

PLEADS YOUTH

Davis is believed to have produced proof of the fact that he was not 18 at the time of the crime. If Judge Cole is convinced the boy's age is what he says it is, the court can do nothing but sentence him to life imprisonment.

Campbell insisted on being tried by a jury, his defense being that he was influenced to aid in the killing of the insurance adjuster by Davis, whom he declares to be of a more dominant personality than himself. Charles E. Scott, former Deputy District Attorney, was appointed by the court to defend Campbell. Dist.-Atty. E. R. Utely and his assistant, J. E. Simpson, are prosecuting the youthful slayer.

Both Davis and Campbell at the coroner's inquest admitted participating in the stoning of Nichols, who had permitted them to enter his car for a ride from Niland to Blythe. Each, however, accused the other of firing the shots that resulted in Nichols's death. They then are said to have stolen the insurance man's car and driven to Blythe, where they were arrested a week later.

Campbell had just been discharged from the Navy at San Diego as an undesirable member, according to evidence in the possession of the District Attorney. The District Attorney also asserts that the shooting of Nichols was done with a revolver that had been purloined by Campbell from a navy locker as he left his ship.

Mrs. Leslie Nichols, widow of the slain man, came here from San Francisco to attend the trial of Campbell.

"Los Angeles Times" Tuesday 10 Apr 1923 p 7

CONVICT YOUTH AFTER BRUTAL DESERT DEATH

No Recommendation for
Leniency Made in
Jury's Verdict

WAS SOUGHT HERE

First Clue to Slaying of
Insurance Man Found
in This City

(By Associated Press Leased Wire)

EL CENTRO, Cal., April 11.—Lawrence C. Campbell was convicted of the murder of Leslie Nichols, insurance adjuster of Los Angeles and San Francisco by a jury in the superior court.

The jury deliberated 90 minutes and then returned a verdict finding Campbell guilty of first degree murder and making no recommendation.

Campbell, who declared he was only 17 years old at the time he and Charles C. Davis shot and stoned Nichols to death on the desert near Niland last January, was pale when the verdict was read but he mustered up a smile.

Second Will Be Sentenced Friday

Campbell comes up for sentence Friday.

Davis, who is an Alabaman, and who asserts he is only 17 years old now, pleaded guilty Monday. He expects to escape the death penalty because of his alleged youthfulness. He also will be sentenced Friday.

Campbell's claims to being less 18 at the time of the slaying were contradicted by witnesses who fixed his age as 19.

The first clue to the murder was discovered in San Bernardino when the watch of Mr. Nichols was found in a pawnshop. He had been listed as missing and when officers found the watch they took up the murder theory, faced the two youths with the charge of the crime and they admitted their guilt.

"San Bernardino (CA) County Sun" Thursday 12 Apr 1923 p 1

NOOSE TIGHTENS ON BOY

*Youth Who, With Companion, Murdered Angeleno,
Found Guilty of Crime by El Centro Jury*

[EXCLUSIVE DISPATCH]

EL CENTRO, April 11.—After deliberating ninety minutes the jury trying Lawrence C. Campbell, 18 years of age, for the murder of Leslie Nichols, a Los Angeles automobile insurance adjuster, tonight returned a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree. The jury made no recommendations and the youthful slayer will be sentenced to hang for one of the most brutal murders recorded in Southern California.

Dist. Atty. Utley expressed satisfaction at the result of the trial, which started Monday morning.

Charlie Davis, 17 years of age, accomplice of Campbell in the killing of Nichols, who was shot and

stoned to death at a lonely spot on the desert near Niland, pleaded guilty to murder Monday. He will face sentence in Superior Judge Cole's court Friday morning.

Campbell, pale, thin and giving all the appearance of one weak mentally, met the verdict with a

smile.

"I guess they thought I would cry if I was convicted, but I fooled them. I'm not going to cry. I hope Utley is satisfied now. He ought to be."

If the youth realized that he finally faced the hangman's noose, he failed to show it. On the contrary, he gave the impression of being half-pleased.

Mrs. Leslie Nichols, widow of the slain man, was in the courtroom when the verdict was read. Sobbing noticeably, she involuntarily rose from her seat and exclaimed "Thank God!" She had attended all sessions of the trial.

FATHER IS NOTIFIED

Dist.-Atty. Utley tonight sent a telegram to Attorney E. A. MacDonald at Marquette, Mich., home of young Campbell, father of the youthful murderer. He had requested a bulletin telling the verdict. Campbell's mother is a bed-ridden invalid.

Attorney Scott, appointed to defend Campbell, made a valiant fight for the boy's life, but the evidence was overwhelming against the youth in view of the defendant's former confessions.

The District Attorney demanded the death penalty, declaring that the State would not be satisfied with less. He said tonight that he would oppose any less penalty for Davis when he comes up for sentence Friday, insisting on absolute proof that the boy was under 17 years of age at the time Nichols was killed.

"Los Angeles Times" Thursday 12 Apr 1923 p 17 -

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/380580451/?terms=%22noose%20tightens%20on%20boy%22&match=1> and https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/79035473/person/352000692730/media/eac36a4c-96f6-44c3-b64b-34697b4acf4f?_phsrc=hFB39708&_phstart=successSource

ADMITS DEATH IS JUST REWARD

EL CENTRO, Cal., Apr. 13.—
“I have taken a human life, and
I believe it is just that I should
forfeit mine.”

This was the comment of Lawrence C. Campbell, 18, convicted of the murder of Leslie Nichols insurance man, as he heard the fatal words of Judge Franklin Cole this morning, dooming him to die on the scaffold at San Quentin on June 22.

Chas. Davis, 17, Campbell's companion, who pleaded guilty to participation in the brutal desert murder, will be sentenced later.

“Sacramento (CA) Star” Friday 13 Apr 1923 p 7

Life Term for Minor, Murder Accomplice

EL CENTRO, April 14.—Charles Davis, confessed accomplice in the murder of Leslie Nichols, insurance man for whose murder Lawrence Campbell was sentenced yesterday to hang, was today given a term of life imprisonment in San Quentin Penitentiary. Davis was spared the death penalty when it was proved that he is just forty-four days under 18 years of age, making it impossible to impose the death sentence.

“San Francisco Chronicle” Sunday 15 Apr 1923 p 16

CAMPBELL HANGS FRIDAY MORNING AT SAN QUENTIN

By United Press Leased Wire

SAN QUENTIN PENITENTIARY, Cal., June 21.—Lawrence Campbell, aged 19, who hangs at 10 a. m. tomorrow for the murder of Leslie Nichols, sat in the death cell here today while his mother and a few friends made their last minute appeals to save him.

Thus far not a word has come from the governor's office or any other source from which even a slight hope of reprieve might be gleaned.

But it seemed to matter little to Campbell. He had gone to the cell at sundown last night after spending his last four hours in the light of day tossing a baseball.

Out in the prison yard he was "catching" for a corpulent fellow prisoner who seemed bent on reducing his weight.

"Something on 'em is what I want," Campbell cried.

The fat man did his best but they were not "hot" enough.

"Let me show you," commanded Campbell, and the two changed places.

For 20 minutes Campbell "boiled them in" with a speed that nearly staggered the fat man. He threw curves and fast ones and now and then a "floater"—taking evident delight in knowing that he would go to the gallows with his "pitching arm" still working.

And then the sun dropped low over the Golden Gate. A guard came and Campbell was led to the death cell to await tomorrow morning, the coming of the prison chaplain, the farewell to his mother and the march to the gallows.

Campbell comes from Marquette, Mich. He was convicted in Imperial county, California, for the murder of Leslie Nichols, insurance man, when Nichols gave Campbell and George Davis a "lift" as they were "hiking" across the desert. Davis is serving a life term.

"Pomona (CA) Progress" Thursday 21 Jun 1923 p 1

BOY BRAVELY GOES TO HIS NOOSE DEATH

SAN QUENTIN, June 22.—Lawrence Campbell, 19-years-old, today paid on the scaffold the penalty for murdering Leslie Nichols, automobile man, on the California desert near Niland last year.

Campbell dropped through the trap at 10:13. Fifteen minutes later he was pronounced dead.

Father Carroll, a Catholic priest, accompanied the condemned youth to the scaffold.

Campbell went to his death bravely.

As he reached the door at the end of the corridor leading into the room where the scaffold stood, tears sprang from his eyes and ran down his cheeks. He appeared to be on the point of breaking and his attendants expected him to sob forth a statement.

But not a word escaped his lips, which but an hour before had been smiling in hope. His face set slightly as he saw the scaffold and the assembled witnesses, and he went through with his final ordeal without change of expression.

"Undoubtedly the bravest human being, man or youth, that ever went to his death here," prison officials declared following the hanging.

Officials made no attempt to conceal their admiration for the youth who played ball in the prison yard yesterday and whistled merrily this morning while preparing for his death.

Campbell never lost hope of obtaining the reprieve that never came.

SACRAMENTO, June 22.—Governor Richardson today made public his attitude toward the pleas for clemency made to him in the case of Lawrence Campbell, 19, who was hanged at San Quentin for murder.

In a statement that reviewed the murder of Leslie Nichols in all its details, the governor closed with these words:

"These two brutal murderers deserve the full penalty meted out to them. A foolish law prevents the hanging of the younger one. Execution of this criminal will prove a protection to every home in California. It will mean greater safety to wives and mothers and less anxiety for their loved ones."

"Modesto (CA) Bee" Friday 22 Jun 1923 p 1

18 YEAR OLD BOY IS HUNG FOR MURDER

Lawrence O. Campbell Executed at San Quentin Penitentiary Today.

**YOUNGEST PRISONER
TO PAY PENALTY**

Was Convicted for Murder of Leslie Nichols, Insurance Adjuster, in Imperial County January 20.

SAN QUENTIN, June 22.—Lawrence O. Campbell, 18, of Marquette, Michigan, was hanged in the San Quentin penitentiary today for the murder of Leslie Nichols, insurance adjuster, in Imperial county, January 20.

He was the youngest prisoner ever to pay the death penalty in California, it is said.

Leslie Nichols, an adjuster of automobile insurance, of San Francisco and Los Angeles, was driving across the Colorado River desert near Niland, California, on January 20, last, when he came upon two youths afoot. He asked them to ride with him. They jumped in and after being driven a short distance, sprang upon Nichols and clubbed him to death. They buried the body in the sand and drove away in Nichols' car.

A few days later Lawrence Campbell and Charles Davis, former sailors, were arrested at Blythe, Calif., by Riverside county officers investigating automobile thefts. In the county jail at Riverside they were overheard talking about the killing of a man on the desert. When questioned they broke down and admitted they slew Nichols, then led officials to the spot in Imperial county where they left the body. This was the first intimation Nichols had met with foul play.

Both Campbell and Davis claimed to be under 18, consequently not sub-

(Continued on Page Five)

18 YEAR OLD BOY IS HUNG FOR MURDER

(Continued from page 1)

ject to the death penalty. It was finally established that Campbell was 18 on November 19, 1922, while Davis did not reach that age until March 5, 1923. Davis pleaded guilty in the Imperial County superior court. He was sentenced to life imprisonment for first degree murder on April 14. Campbell was convicted by a jury and was sentenced to hang.

It was brought out in Campbell's trial that he ran away from home at Marquette, Mich., to join the navy, but was discharged from the service as undesirable. Davis came from Birmingham, Ala., and had served a term in the Alabama reformatory.

Judge Franklin J. Cole, of the Imperial County superior court, in passing the sentence to Campbell, said: "This may seem severe punishment to you, but the evidence showed this to have been a most atrocious murder. If your execution deters others from committing similar crimes, it will be worth while to the people of this state."

In regard to Davis, the court said: "The law prohibiting the execution of a murderer of this sort merely because of his age is improper and should be repealed. The jury which tries a murderer is certainly in better position to determine the punishment for the crime than the legislature. This was a particularly atrocious crime and it is regrettable that this defendant cannot be compelled to share the penalty the law requires of the accomplice, Campbell. This case should be cited to the legislature and perhaps it would aid in modifying the law concerning hanging."

Governor Friend Richardson made an early move to block any plan for executive clemency for Campbell when he said on April 14 that the "sob sisters of California will only be wasting their time and energy" in imploring him to save the life of Lawrence Campbell. The governor said he not only is an advocate of capital punishment, but he believes that "every woman in the state should work for its enforcement."

"La Grande (OR) Observer" Friday 22 Jun 1923 p 1 & p 5 -

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/100267728> and

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/100267732> and https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/79035473/person/352000692730/media/ed1f5b65-958c-4816-a39d-3cd82de7c0ff?_phsrc=hFB39708&_phstart=successSource

His murderers:

SPELL OF DESERT LEADS TO MURDER IS THEORY OF SAND ROVERS AS YOUTHS CONFESS

By JACK JUNGMEYER
NEA Staff Correspondent

EL CENTRO, Cal., Feb. 13.—The desert does queer things to men.

Many have whispered of its mirage madness, its grinning skulls, its singular feuds and unspeakable crimes.

And now, in the brutish murder of Leslie Nichols, good Samaritan of the road, charged against Charlie Davis and Lawrence C. Campbell, whom he had given a ride, desert veterans see the most horrid evidence of its spell.

"A killing as senseless as it was cold-blooded," said Sheriff C. L. Gillette guarding from the wrath of Imperial county the 17-year-old slayers, according to their asserted confession. Possession of Nichols' auto and watch caused their arrest. They led officers to the mutilated body.

Just a Notion

"We just got the notion as we drove along," said the boys trying to cover bewilderment with bravado. "We only started to rob the guy."



CHARLIE DAVIS (ABOVE) AND LAWRENCE CAMPBELL (BELOW), JOINTLY CHARGED WITH THE MURDER OF LESLIE NICHOLS.

Davis of Birmingham, Ala., and Campbell of Marquette, Mich., had started across the Colorado desert, as they tell the story—broke, out of a job, hoofing it.

The mesquite wilderness with its scuttling lizards and shadows hot as light, scoffed at restraints. It was a strange world for city boys, without a cop in a hundred miles and with nothing to check primal impulse.

"Have a ride, boys?" proffered Nichols, traveling adjuster of an insurance company, short-cutting between highways in his flivver.

"Will we—say, I'll tell a guy! Hot as the hinges o' hell, ain't it?"

The good Samaritan brought out smokes and matches. He looked at his watch, eager to get back to his wife in Los Angeles.

Davis and Campbell looked at it, too.

And then the desert nudged them with a suggestion.

"Naw," said Davis, "he didn't fight. I d'no why—" with a shrug. "And he was a good guy, too—gave us cigarets and everything. I d'no."

"It takes sound character to stand even a little of the desert," suggested the old sand rovers gathered here for the trial, "because the lying desert always says, 'There's nobody to see or hear what you do here.'"

They halted for a drink of water. Again the desert nudged: A thousand square miles of trackless sand, and this defenseless man with a watch, some money and an auto to get away in!

As Nichols stooped to drink, one of the boys, according to the alleged confession, cracked him on the head

with a rock. .
 "A fine way to treat a fr~~ie~~nd," dazedly muttered the victim as they stripped him naked. Then, says the confession, they shot him. He staggered off. They cracked him again with rocks, and shot, many times, covering the body with sand, police quote them as saying:
 His watch they pawned for \$7 at the nearest town.
Recount Tale Calmly
 In the shadow of the gallows here, under threats of lynching, they recounted the tale without emotion, arguing only as to who had fired the fatal shot, according to Sheriff Gillette.
 "But why did you kill Nichols? You could have robbed him without that. Did he put up a fight?"

"Modesto (CA) Bee" Tuesday 13 Feb 1923 p 12 -

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/689358325/?terms=%22spell%20of%20desert%22%20modesto&match=1> and https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/79035473/person/352000692730/media/190868cd-0c7e-46a5-9512-b7b194db94d2?_phsrc=hFB39708&_phstart=successSource



Lawrence C. Campbell (1905 MI – hanged 22 Jun 1923 at San Quentin Prison, Marin Co. CA). Born 1905 Marquette, Marquette MI. One of the youngest men executed in CA. CA prisoner #37725. Campbell is buried in San Quentin Prison Cemetery, San Rafael, Marin CA. F: 131685542. He was the son of John D. Campbell & Jennie LaBine.

Condemned.

Institution, CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON	Reg. No. 37725
NAME Lawrence C. Campbell	Color White.
Alias	Received 6-15-23
County Imperial.	Sentence Death.
Crime Murder. 1 st	Disch.
Occupation Machinist	Paroled
Executed 6-22-23 Date of execution June 22 ~ 1923-22-23 Extra Head measure 6 1/4.	
Previous Record	
MARKS, SCARS AND MOLES	
Lat last out, Anchor U.S.S. Merwin No. 322	
Cause of death (Fracture of the neck)	
Drop fell at 10.13 AM	
Death at 10.28 AM	
Length of drop 5'-10"	
successful	

California, U.S., Prison and Correctional Records, 1851-1950 for Lawrence C Campbell

San Quentin State Prison > Identification Cards > Identification Cards, 36571-37900

execution of Lawrence C. Campbell -

https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8833/images/40477_2221301551_2455-02313?pld=281676

NAME AND NUMBER OF CONVICT			NATIVITY		CRIME		WHEN RECEIVED			SENTENCE	
							MONTH	DAY	YEAR	Yrs.	Mos.
37725- Lawrence C. Campbell (Condemned)			Michigan		Murder 1 st		April	15	1923.		
COUNTY SENT FROM			AGE	OCCUPATION		HEIGHT		COMPLEXION	COLOR OF EYES	COLOR OF HAIR	REMARKS
						FT.	INS.				
Imperial			18	Machinist		5	6 1/4	Fair	Blue	Dk Brn	Exp. 6-22-23

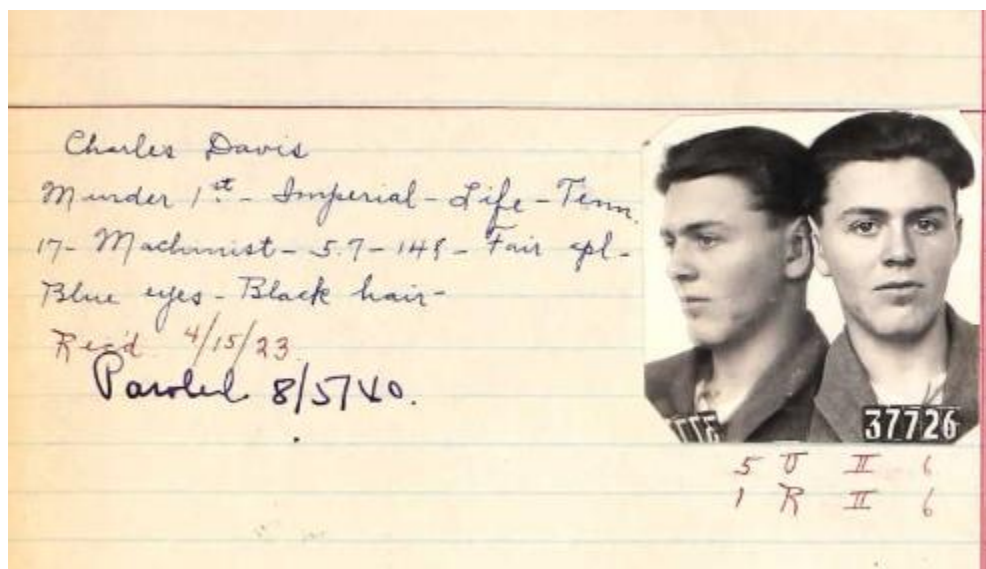
NAME AND NUMBER OF CONVICT			NATIVITY		CRIME		WHEN RECEIVED			SENTENCE	
							MONTH	DAY	YEAR	Yrs.	Mos.
37726- Charles Davis			Tenn.		Murder 1 st		April	15	1923.		
COUNTY SENT FROM			AGE	OCCUPATION		HEIGHT		COMPLEXION	COLOR OF EYES	COLOR OF HAIR	REMARKS
						FT.	INS.				
Imperial			17	Machinist		5	7	Fair	Blue	Black	

California, U.S., Prison and Correctional Records, 1851-1950 for Lawrence C. Campbell

San Quentin State Prison > Prison Registers > Prison Registers, 1922-1926

Prisoners #37725 (Campbell & #37726 (Davis) -

https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8833/images/40476_332983-00144?pld=63772



California, U.S., Prison and Correctional Records, 1851-1950 for Charles Davis

San Quentin State Prison > Inmate Photographs and Mug Books > Book 11, 36909-39651

Prisoner #37726 - Charles Davis - entered prison 15 Apr 1923, paroled 5 Aug 1940 -

https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8833/images/40477_2221301551_2432-00094?treeid=&personid=&hintid=&queryId=9ec563e6231b2042dd7a69442f55d376&usePUB=true&_phsrc=hFB39730&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pld=207485

Institution, <i>CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON.</i>		Reg. No. <i>37726</i>
NAME <i>Charles Davis.</i>	Color <i>White.</i>	
Alias _____	Received <i>4-15-23-</i>	
County <i>Imperial.</i>	Sentence <i>life.</i>	
Crime <i>Murder 1"</i>	Disch. _____	
Occupation <i>Machinist.</i>	Paroled _____	
Previous Record _____		

https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8833/images/40477_2221301551_2455-02315?treeid=&personid=&hintid=&queryId=9ec563e6231b2042dd7a69442f55d376&usePUB=true&_phsrc=hFB39732&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pld=281678

Charles Davis

in the California, U.S., Death Index, 1940-1997

Detail	Source
Name: Charles Davis	
Social Security #: 553227686	
Gender: Male	
Birth Date: 15 Mar 1906	
Birth Place: Tennessee	
Death Date: 5 Jan 1995	
Death Place: Kern	

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/16919797:5180?tid=&pid=&queryId=42edf3c1ece6016905dcd2a8a0416e0e&_phsrc=hFB39734&_phstart=successSource

Although newspaper reports of the time say Charles Davis was from Alabama, his other records indicate he was born in Tennessee. This appears to be the correct man – although reports of the time say he was 44 days short of his 18th birthday when he murdered Leslie Nichols – but conflicting reports say he was only 16 at the time so there are questions now (as there were then) about his real age.

In the 1930 census, Charles L. [sic] Davis, 25 US, was a laborer in the San Quentin Prison Road Camp, Weaverville, Trinity CA.

In the 1940 census for Monrovia, Los Angeles Co. CA, Charles C. Davis, 34 TN, was an inmate in the State Prison Camp.

Name: Leslie Lewis Nichols

Name variations:

Military:

On Tuscania: 20th Eng. 17th/Co. E - private

Serial number: 250,607

Entered service from: San Francisco, San Francisco CA

Sailed on "Tuscania" as: Leslie L. Nichols

Next-of-kin on "Tuscania": wife Mrs. L.L. Nichols, 638 - 8th Ave., San Francisco CA

Returned from war on: "Santa Paula" May 1919

Sailed on return ship as: Leslie L. Nichols (Fold3 indexed as Leslie L. Nicholas but reads Nichols on original form)

Next-of-kin on return ship & rank: wife Mrs. Mary E. Nichols, 638 - 8th Ave., San Francisco CA (PFC, Engrs)

World War I draft registration (1917): as Leslie L. Nichols - b. 8 Nov 1891 Solano CA; res: 638 - 8th Ave. San Francisco CA. Married, with wife. Insurance clerk, Northern Assurance Co., 330 California St., San Francisco CA. Short in height, medium build.

Veterans Administration Military Index:

Enlisted: 7 Dec 1917

Discharged: 12 Jun 1919

Address: 619 Blaboa [sic/Balboa] St., San Francisco CA

Rank/unit: private 1st class, 17th Co., 20th Engineers

Birth & death:

Born: 8 Nov 1891 Solano Co. CA

Died: 20 Jan 1923 Ogilby/Nilan, Imperial Co. CA (murdered by 2 hitchhiking teenagers, shot & stoned to death, 1 of killers became youngest to hang in CA)

Find A Grave record: 100540094 – presence on Tuscania indicated in text

Burial location: San Francisco, San Francisco CA [according to Find A Grave, reinterred 1 Jul 1939 in San Francisco National Cemetery]

Cemetery: San Francisco National

Tombstone: veteran tombstone: California Pvt 1 Cl. 20 Engrs.

Father: Joseph Brayton Nichols, 17 Jun 1844 Fall River, Bristol MA – 23 Oct 1900 San Francisco, San Francisco CA. Son of William H. Nichols & Eliza Dean. Buried in Rockville Cemetery, Fairfield, Solano CA.

Find A Grave: 8706060

Mother: Mary Kimball Freeman Nichols, Sep 1847 MI – 20 Mar 1920 Solano Co. CA.

Daughter of Otis Curtis Freeman & Lucinda Woodworth. Appointed postmaster of Rockville, Solano CA 4 May 1898. Buried in Rockville Cemetery, Fairfield, Solano CA.

Find A Grave: 8706083

Parents' marriage: 25 Dec 1866 Benicia, Solano CA

Spouse: Mary Elizabeth Jeffery Nichols Macbride, 1 Sep 1897 CA – 16 Apr 1988 Kern Co. CA. SSN 554-21-0189. Daughter of William T.C. Jeffery & Louisa Van Nostrand. Mary Macbride's CA Death Index notes her father as Jeffery & her mother as Nostrand.

Spouse Find A Grave:

Marriage: 16 Jan 1915 in San Francisco, San Francisco CA at St. James's Church by Catholic priest Fr. Michael R. Powers. Leslie Lewis, age 23, son of Joseph B. Nichols & Mary K. Freeman and Mary Elizabeth Jeffery, age 17, daughter of William T.C. Jeffery & Louisa van Nostrand. According to veteran records, she entered military service on 10 Aug 1919 in San Francisco CA.

Children:

Siblings: Leslie was the youngest child.

- Clara Bell/Belle Nichols O'Connor Collins Mason, 4 Dec 1869 Benicia, Solano CA – 21 Jun 1938 San Francisco, San Francisco CA. - First married to Thomas J. O'Connor, whom she married in St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, San Francisco, San Francisco CA on 17 Aug 1898. Their son Harvey Nichols O'Connor was born 28 Apr 1900, died 3 Jan 1902, buried in the same cemetery as his mother, F: 164967306. She filed for divorce in May 1911. – In 1914 registered to vote in CA as Clara B. O'Connor of Oakland CA, housekeeper, Progressive Party. - Married to Archibald F. Collins, son of Benjamin Moss Collins & Clarissa Jane Rose, on 2 Jun 1912 in Alameda Co. CA. In the "Alameda (CA) Daily Argus" Monday 3 Jun 1912 p 6, marriage license application in city of Alameda CA: Archie F. Collins, age 35, of Turlock CA & Clara B. O'Connor, age 36, of Oakland CA. Arch/Archie, b. 1877 CA, died 5 Dec 1915 in Stanislaus Co. CA & is buried in Modesto Citizens Cemetery, Modesto, Stanislaus CA, F: 57527506. – In the 1920 census for Suisun, Solano CA, Clara B. Collins (50 CA, widow, father b. MA, mother b. MI) & her mother Mary F. Nichols (72 MI, widow, father b. NH, mother b. NY) were servants for a private family, living with brothers Homer L. Burrell (26 CA) & Elmer E. Burrell (28 CA), grain farmers. - Died with surname Mason. Buried in Benicia City Cemetery, Benicia, Solano CA. F: 164948647
- Joseph Gordon Nichols, 26 Apr 1872 CA – 13 Feb 1946 San Francisco Co. CA. Husband of Leona Bell Harwell (1879-1921, F: 100945196), daughter of Jasper Marion Harwell & Mary Tennessee N. Logan, whom he married 8 Sep 1901 in Rockville, Solano CA. Joseph's brother Oscar marries Leona's sister Opehalia Harwell. Buried in Clovis Cemetery, Clovis, Fresno CA. F: 100944944
- Hattie L. Nichols Simpson, 6 Aug 1874 CA – 6 May 1960 Loma Linda, San Bernardino CA. Wife of Perry Oliver Simpson (1877-1952, F: 27535026). Buried in Hillside Memorial Park, Redlands, San Bernardino CA. F: 27535025
- Oscar Henry Nichols, 17 Jan 1877 Benicia, Solano CA – 28 Jun 1959 Mariposa Co. CA. Husband of Opehelia Josephine ("Josie") Harwell (1877-1972, F: 100945464), the daughter of Joseph Marion Harwell & Mary Tennessee N. Logan. Oscar's brother Joseph married Opehelia's sister Leona. Buried in Clovis Cemetery, Clovis, Fresno CA. F: 100945323
- Cecil Irene Nichols Stewart, 22 Jun 1879 Benicia, Solano CA – 20 Jun 1967 San Diego, San Diego CA. Wife of Robert Stewart (1864-1927, F: 170985950). Buried in Rockville Cemetery, Fairfield, Solano CA. F: 8706100

- Neva May Nichols Murray, 4 Jan 1882 Benicia, Solano CA – 22 May 1976 Sonoma Co. CA. Wife of John H. Murray (1877-1965, F: 8706036). Buried in Rockville Cemetery, Fairfield, Solano CA. F: 8706045
- Bertha Adeline Nichols Owen, 29 Sep 1886 CA – 11 Aug 1954 Los Angeles Co. CA. Wife of Carl P.L. Owen (1889-1975, F: 47543475). Buried in Grand View Memorial Park & Crematory, Glendale, Los Angeles CA. F: 47543474
- Ruth Alice Nichols Wallace, 23 Feb 1887 CA – 29 Mar 1915 Alameda Co. CA. Married in 1910 to Joseph Ross Wallace (1880-1941, F: 167382626). Buried in Chapel of the Chimes Columbarium & Mausoleum, Oakland, Alameda CA. F: 181080417
- Raymond Lawton Nichols, 4 Jan 1889 Cordelia, Solano CA – 4 Mar 1966 CA. Husband of Myrtle L. (1895-1955, F: 98522107). Buried in Clovis Cemetery, Clovis, Fresno CA. F: 98521554

Notes:

Pre-war:

Wartime:

“San Francisco Chronicle” 11 Feb 1918 – photo - a cable was received that he is safe. Leslie’s parents & wife live at 633 - 8th Ave., San Francisco CA>

“San Francisco Examiner” 11 Feb 1918 p 3 – Leslie’s mother is Mrs. Mary Freeman Nichols, 638 - 8th Ave., San Francisco CA. She never thought him dead. Leslie is age 26, her youngest child. His "brave little wife" didn't hold him back. His ancestors have fought in almost every American war. In his last letter roaring to get the Kaiser

Post-war:

Obituary:

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Numerous CA newspaper articles including "San Francisco Examiner" 26 Jun 1923 p4, "Oakland Tribune" 27 Jan 1923 p 13, "Los Angeles Times" 28 Jan 1923 p2 - Leslie was a special agent of Northern Assurance Co. of London, investigating car thefts. He picked up 2 teens hitchhiking in the Mojave Desert, who hit him in the head with a rock when he was drinking water, shot him, robbed him, stripped him naked. Nichols ran, but they shot him again & stoned him several times.

Lawrence Clarence (“Frank”) Campbell was 18 years old. Convicted of murder & hanged 28 Jun 1923 in San Quentin, one of the youngest persons hanged in CA. Campbell is buried in the San Quentin Prison Cemetery, F: 131685542. His accomplice, 17-yr-old Charles Davis, was given a life sentence. Both confessed after being overheard by a jailer. Newspapers said both were exalted, gloating, non-remorseful.

They were captured because they had no papers for the car stolen from Nichols. Nichols’s body was found buried in sand about 50 miles SE of Mecca CA.

Social Security number:

Censuses:

1900 Green Valley Judicial Township, Solano Co. CA [Joseph died 23 Oct 1900]

Jos. B. Nichols, 55 MA, Jun 1845, parents b. MA, married 33 years, day laborer

Mary, 53 MI, Sep 1847, father b. VT, mother b. NY, gave birth to 11 children, 11 are living

Oscar, 23 CA, Jan 1877, farm laborer

Gordon, 28 CA, Apr 1872, farm laborer

Neva, 18 CA, Jan 1882, at school

Bertha, 16 CA, Sep 1884, at school

Ruth, 13 CA, Feb 1887, at school

Raymond, 11 CA, Jun 1889, at school

Leslie, 9 CA, Nov 1891, at school

1910 Oakland, Alameda CA – 670 E. 23rd St.

Mary F. Nichols, 62 MI, widow, gave birth to 11 children, 10 are living

Bertha A., 24 CA, saleswoman, department store

Ruth A., 23 CA, cashier, shoe store

Raymond L., 21 CA, carpenter, house

Leslie L., 18 CA, clerk, insurance

Clara M. O'Connor, 40 CA, married, in 1st marriage, gave birth to 1 children, none are living, tailoress, tailor shop [daughter of Mary – she sues for divorce in 1911]