Six of Nedra’s maternal ancestors numbered among the 102 “Mayflower” passengers who established **Plymouth Colony** in 1620. These included John Alden, Priscilla Mullins and her parents William and Alice Mullins, and brother Joseph. William, Alice and Joseph, along with 47 others, died in the terrible sickness (possibly scurvy) the first winter in Plymouth. Priscilla was probably too young to be married and was thereby orphaned, her brother and sister in England being her only surviving kin. Only 6 of the 29 women on the Mayflower, including Priscilla Mullins, survived the first winter. Priscilla Mullins Alden is remembered by name owing to a family legend and then published in embellished form by descendant Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in “**The Courtship of Miles Standish**” in 1858 wherein Priscilla’s alleged words “**Why don’t you speak for yourself, John?**” remain a part of American folklore.
Others among Nedra’s Plymouth Colony ancestors included Governor of Plymouth Colony William Bradford; Henry Sampson; Francis Cooke; Mary Chilton and Susanna Furner. Ancestors William Bassett and Elizabeth Tilden Bassett were aboard the “Fortune” in 1621, the second ship to bring colonists from England. Aboard the “Anne” in 1623, the third ship to bring colonists to Plymouth Colony, were Nedra’s ancestors Jane Cooke, Experience Mitchell, Hester Mahieu and John Francis Sprague whose son John Sprague was killed in the King Philip’s War in 1666.

While most of Nedra’s maternal ancestors were northerners, her paternal ancestors were predominately southerners. Maternal and paternal ancestors gradually migrated westward from one farming area to another, but developed new vocations when they arrived in early New Mexico.

“Americans are always moving on. The stream uncrossed, the promise still untried/The metal sleeping in the mountainside.”

Stephen Vincent Benet

Like most early Americans, Nedra’s ancestors were always moving on: crossing oceans and rivers, seeking promises, exploring new lands, and finally, mining precious metals and turquoise in the hills of the Territory of New Mexico.

The Land of Enchantment in which Nedra’s maternal and paternal great grandparents settled prior to 1880 was a Territory of immense beauty and abundant resources --- timber, wild game, precious metals, endless grasslands, wild mountain streams, meadows and snow clad mountains peaks. All migrated to the Land of Enchantment about the same time to seek new opportunities. The Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad extended into New Mexico about the time all Nedra’s great grandparents arrived prior to 1880, and the railroad probably influenced their migration.
The AT&SF Railroad had built the luxurious Montezuma Hotel on the Gallinas River where Nedra’s great grandfather James Hanson worked a short distance from the thriving community of Las Vegas, New Mexico. The hotel beckoned dignitaries from afar, and Las Vegas was then the most important town in the Territory. James had earlier married Sarah June Acridge in Cherokee Co., Kansas.
Sarah June was a daughter of Julitha Pressley Acridge, who was probably part Cherokee or Creek while her husband was Confederate Cherokee Mounted Rifles Captain William Henry Acridge.

On Nedra’s paternal (Callender) side, her Great Grandfather James Franklin Callender removed from Kentucky to the bustling New Mexico boom towns of Bland and then Cerrillos where James and her Grandfather Weyman Callender engaged in staking and significantly profiting from numerous claims, mining and businesses.

Weyman Callender married Belle Arnott in 1903 shortly after she arrived in New Mexico from Indiana. A relative remembered Weyman and Belle, and said “she wore two pistols on her hips and was a good shot!”
The early 1890s saw the beginning of a gold and silver mining town named Bland. Bland's most amazing feat was its location. Tucked along a narrow canyon aperture only sixty feet wide, the town had over fifty buildings including four sawmills, two banks, a newspaper, a hotel, stock exchange, opera house, a school, a church, over a dozen saloons and miscellaneous stores. Bland was a lusty, booming, hell-raising, hardworking metropolis of over three thousand people until 1904 when production began to show signs of weakening. Soon thereafter, Bland's boom had passed. The town is now deserted and stands on private property closely guarded under lock and key.

Along with two others, James Franklin Callender bought lots, built houses, worked the mines and named a new settlement “Madrid.”

Nedra's paternal grandfather Weyman Callender followed his father and moved to NM about 1900 where he was a grocery salesman in Bland. He was subsequently a turquoise miner and owned a blacksmith shop in Cerrillos, NM. He later owned a market in Albuquerque, and is reputed to have traveled to Arizona in an attempt to locate the mythical Lost Dutchman Mine in the Superstition Mts. near Phoenix. In 1918, Tony Simoni purchased the Jones Building on First Street in Cerrillos from E.W. Callender for $3,000.00. This is still recorded on a Historic Marker including the name of Weyman Callender on the Simoni Store.
Nedra’s father, Clair Arnott Callender, was born in Bland, New Mexico Territory in 1905, graduated from high school in Cerrillos, and attended the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell.

He earned a degree from the Academic Department of New Mexico Normal University (now Highlands University), Las Vegas, and also attended UNM. While at Citizen’s Military Training Camp at Fort Bliss, TX, he was approved for Olympian in the 100 and 220 yard dash, but was unable to participate in the Olympics. He became a telegrapher for the AT&SF Railroad in Springer where he met and married Nedra’s mother, Evelyn Leroy Wright. They were married in Santa Fe in 1926.

Nedra’s mother, Evelyn Leroy Wright, was born in Las Vegas, NM in 1907, the only child of Josephine Edith Hanson and Leroy Floyd Wright. Leroy and Josephine were married in California in 1906 where Leroy was a tailor. Josephine was a librarian in Springer, New Mexico in the 1920s.

They later lived in El Paso where Leroy owned El Paso Plate Glass and Mirror Co. at the time of his retirement and subsequent move to Albuquerque.

Nedra was born in Springer, NM in 1927, the only child of Clair Arnott Callender and Evelyn Leroy Wright. She attended schools in Santa Fe, Dallas, and graduated from Albuquerque High School in 1945. She graduated from University of New Mexico in 1949 with a B.S. in Science and did graduate studies majoring in Biology. She was a member of Alpha Delta Pi Sorority.
Nedra was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps after successfully completing the first Marine Corps Women Officers Candidate School following WW II at Quantico, VA in the summer of 1949. She subsequently worked as a bacteriologist and medical technician in Albuquerque prior to marrying Larry Gordon in 1950 in Albuquerque. They moved to Silver City NM where Larry worked for the New Mexico Department of Public Health, and Nedra worked as the Department bacteriologist, performing milk and water analyses.
Nedra became a full-time, stay-at-home mother following the birth of the first of her three children, Debra Gwyn in 1951, following their move to Albuquerque. Kent Leroy was born in Santa Fe in 1953 and Gary Ladd in Albuquerque in 1961.

Nedra did volunteer work for the American Cancer Society and Assistance League of Albuquerque. She has always been primarily concerned with the health and welfare of her family, and applauds their recognition and achievements. She enjoys bowling, bridge, and golf at Albuquerque Country Club and Pendaries Village.