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**University of Memphis Libraries**  
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## **Hiram Hill Collins papers**

**Title:** Hiram Hill Collins papers  
**Collection No:** MSS.351  
**Creator:** Hiram Hill Collins (1823-1915)  
**Extent:** 0.25 cubic feet  
**Inclusive Dates:** 1857-1988

**Abstract:** The collection comprises mainly letters written by Hiram Hill Collins (1823-1915) to his wife and family at home in DeSoto County, Mississippi, while he served in the Confederate artillery in Georgia and Alabama during the last years of the Civil War.

**Donor:** Mrs. Rogers Parker, Memphis, Tennessee, February 1993.  
**Processed by:** Ed Frank, July 1993; Gerald Chaudron, March 2014.  
**Access:** Open to all researchers.  
**Language:** English  
**Preferred Citation:** Hiram Hill Collins papers, Preservation and Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

**Publication date:** March 2014

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## Biographical information

Hiram Hill Collins was born in Rockingham, North Carolina on August 23, 1823, though his father, Jones Collins (b.1801), and mother, Margaret Tune Collins, were originally from Virginia. Jones moved with his family to Memphis, Tennessee, about 1838 and then to DeSoto County, Mississippi. In 1850, Hiram married Mary Ann Parker Hannaford (1833-1924) who was born in Halifax County, North Carolina. Her father, Joseph Wise Hannaford (1793-1848) was from Virginia and moved his family to Shelby County, Tennessee, and then DeSoto County. Hiram worked as a farmer and postmaster in the Lewisburg area near Cockrum. He joined the Confederate army in 1863 and served in the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Mississippi Light Artillery. Hiram died on May 8, 1915 and was buried in Olive Branch, Mississippi.

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## Scope and contents

The collection includes a few pre- and post-Civil War documents, but the bulk of the collection is made up of letters written by Hiram Hill Collins to his wife and family at home in DeSoto County, Mississippi, while he served in the Confederate artillery in Georgia and Alabama during the last years of the war. In his letters, Collins expresses his loneliness and his fear for the welfare of his family, and also comments on conditions in the field.

Two letters, 1857 and 1859, to Collins from his uncle, G.W. Collins, and cousin, L.A. Collins, both of Hart County, Kentucky, pass along family news and comment on conditions in their locale. A letter of 1883 by Collins asks the assistance of Colonel C.H. Causey of Suffolk, Virginia, in the settlement of the estate of his wife's relatives. Finally, a pedigree chart of George G. Collins (b. 1952) traces his ancestry back four generations (Collins-Tune and Hannaford-Ellis families).

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## Provenance

The collection was donated by Mrs. Rogers Parker (1906-1998) who for many years was a professor in the University of Memphis Speech and Drama Department where she was better known as Betty May Collins.

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## Subject terms

Collins, Hiram Hill, 1823-1915.

Confederate States of America. Army. Mississippi Light Artillery.

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## Inventory

Box 1

Folder 1

1. 1857 May 1. G.W. Collins, Hickory Flat, Hart County, Ky., to H. H. Collins (nephew).

Family news: deaths, marriages, speculation as to the whereabouts of siblings, and "...thanks be to the Lord I am yet alive and well although I have lost my first companion and the daughter of our love...."

2. 1859 June 16. L.A. Collins to H.H. Collins.  
Family news and addresses; "...the men and women are doing reather bad here of late for to marrow a man to to be hung at Munfordville for killing his wife I don't know what this world is comeing to (or reather the people that is in the world) The cars are running from Louisville to Munfordville I think some of you all might come to see us...."
3. 1864? February 7. H.H. Collins, Panola, Miss., to Mary Collins.  
"I have a verry bad chance to wright to you as we have no mail I have to catch my chance and send it some one passing...if you have a school you would do well to send Ben and Harvey to school as I dont think they will do much good at home..."
4. 1864 August 1. H.H. Collins, Atlanta, Ga., to Mary Collins.  
"I have a chance to send a letter to granada perhaps it will be forwarded to you from thare...I am indeed uneasy about Jim Tuckers Brigade was in ahevly fight the 28th inst in which I learn that the Brigade was awfully cut up...you might think it was an easy matter to see each other being in the same army but it is a hard matter even to get a letter from each other the lines of battle being some 6 or 8 miles long...I have not been out of hearing of cannon for 82 days..."
5. 1864 August 28. H.H. Collins, Atlanta, Ga., to Dear Friends [William S. Burton].  
Has received nothing from home and does not know if his letters are getting there. "I left home in April Mclendons company proced to demopolis Ala, thence General Polk detailed myself with 22 others to Hoskins battery we then proceed to Rome ga, whare we fell in with General Johnson army retreating from Dalton and have finally made a stand at Atlanta we have been here 37 days....we have had a very hard campaign and have lost a great many men out of a squad of 23 men detailed we have 7 left but one killed dead the balance sick and wounded gone to the hospital...I think it would be good Idear to sow a good deal of wheat this fall I must close for want of paper this sheet cost me 50 cts and the envelope 25 cts...."
6. 1864 September (?). H.H. Collins to Mary Collins. [damaged letter]  
"You would perhaps like to know how I was off for clothing I have aplenty of cloths except socks....I have not been out of h[earing o]f cannon from 17th of may unti[l] the 27th of august....we have had four days of peace that we have not heard a cannon but we are expecting Sherman to turn up some whare else soon and perhaps the hardest fighting is yet to do....I will tell you a little circumstance that ocured to me the other day in the evening late my mess and self was cooking supper while a few Stray balls was flying and me thought I heard you say do not Stay out here and expose yourself unnecessary and but a few minutes one bal passed near one of my messmates head....September the 9th, 1864, In camp near lovejoy Station on the Georgia R.R. 25 miles south of Atlanta. Mary Since the within was written we have had to Evacuate Atlanta and the Yankies now hold possession of it....we now have some prospect of geting back to our company which is at Selma Ala our Capt has made aplication for us...."
7. 1864 September 22. H.H. Collins, Opelika, Ala., to Mary Collins.  
"I was pleased to learn from Leannah letter you had your children was all going to School that was large enough....I am again with my own company...[Brother James] told me that he was looking for aletter from home soon by wises negro....I am nearly bearfooted and bareheaded but I reccon I will get some clothing before long the nights is geting a little cool now..."
8. 1864 September 28. H.H. Collins, Opelika, Ala., to Mary Collins. [page missing]  
"I want to know if filly has brought you acolt this Spring and how your hogs are looking and how Benton and Hearvey are behaving their Selves..."

9. 1864 October 1. H.H. Collins, Opelika, Ala., to Mary Collins.  
Collins sick with a "dull heavy headache." Now in Merrin's Mississippi Battery.
10. 1864 October 31. H.H. Collins, Opelika, Ala., to Mary Collins. Written on ledger sheet headed 'Account of Freight Received at Western & Atlantic Rail-Road, from Georgia Rail-Road'.  
Has received August and September letters from home. "Several of the company has applied for furlows and has been disapproved....[to sons] obey your mother Strictly and be a dutiful boy....I hope Soon to have the pleasure to Shake your little hands....be good and kind to your mother and your father will love you A due my boys for the presant"
11. 1864 November 5. H.H. Collins, Opelika, Ala., to Mary Collins. On Western & Atlantic Rail-Road sheet.  
"...have been to preaching several times I have drawn me a verry nice bible which the government furnish to all the company that wants one we draw nearly every thing for our comfort and convenience from the government I have not drawn any money yet...."
12. 1864 November 28. H.H. Collins, Opelika, Ala., to Mary Collins. On Western & Atlantic Rail-Road sheet.  
"...we have tolerable good cabbins but little to eat drill twice a day at 10 and at 3 oclock...."
13. 1865 February 2. H.H. Collins, Opelika, Ala., to Mary Collins.  
"...we have many rumors afloat now about peace I do not know that thare is any confidence in the reports or not."
14. 1865 February 14. H.H. Collins, Headquarters, Merrins Mississippi Battery, leave request.  
"I respectfully ask your attention to the following circumstances I have a wife who is in feeble health and Seven little children the oldest of which is but Eleven years of age that are wholly dependant on my labor for a support I have not been at home in Twelve months and being informed of their destitute condition and that my presance was absolutely necessary to make some provision to support them this year I respectfully ask that I may be allowed a furlough of 30 days to go to my home near Senatobia in Desoto county Miss to make provision for them the presant year so that I may be able to do my duty to my cuntry without the reflection on my mind that my family are suffering for the real necessarys of life. Respectfully..." On the reverse of the document are approvals and endorsements for 30 days furlough by officers up to the Departmental Commander Lieutenant General Richard Taylor's Assistant Adjutant General.
15. Undated. Envelope addressed to Wm. S. Burton, Esqr, Cockrum, Desoto county, Miss, in care of F.M. Jones from Private H.H. Collins, attached to Hoskins Battery, Ectors Brigade, Frenches divison, Stewarts corpse. Possibly related to 1864 August 28 letter.
16. 1883 September 3. H.H. and Mary Collins, Lewisburg, DeSoto County, Miss., to Colonel C. H. Causey, Suffolk, Va.  
Request that he look after the Collins' interests in the settlement of the estate of Mary Collins' uncle and aunt, Thomas W. and Mary B. Hannaford.
17. circa 1990. Pedigree chart of George Gayden Collins (b. 1952), great-grandson of Hiram Hill Collins.

Folder 2

Photocopies of the collection materials.