

## Professional Autobiography of D. C. Newman Collins

Born in Haddonfield, N.J. in 1865, educated in high school, Franklin Institute in Philadelphia and by private instruction by active contractors and engineers.

In 1882 he started with William M. Hoopes & Son in Haddonfield in general contracting with whom he served in making plans, estimates and active work in various dwellings, barns, stores, hotels, docks, coal pockets and other frame structures and brick buildings.

In 1887 he was elected chief of the Haddon Field Fire Company in Haddonfield and constructed their fire tower and mapped the location of water supply for fire purposes. He also drew plans for the Armory for the Howitzer Gun Detachment of the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment, National Guard of New Jersey, located in Haddonfield.

In 1885 he joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the National Guard and served in the musical division, the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment Band until 1889. He attended art class (night sketch club) in Philadelphia in 1886 and made various plans for houses from time to time.

In 1888 he engaged with Collins & Autenreith, Architects in Philadelphia, worked on plans of a warehouse at 1815-17 Market Street and on a brown stone building remodeling at 10<sup>th</sup> & Chestnut Streets.

In 1889 he planned several Haddonfield Buildings and in April engaged with the Phoenix Iron Company at Phoenixville, Pa.

In 1890 he left the Phoenix Iron Company to manage the Peerless Vitrified Emery Wheel Company in Haddonfield, of which he was president. Shortly afterward he went back to the Phoenix Iron Company as structural engineer and joined the Phoenix Military Band.

In 1892 he resigned from the Phoenix Iron Company to engage with the Pencoyd Iron Company in Philadelphia. He joined the Symphony Society in Philadelphia and served Pencoyd until September 1893 when he resigned to join the engineering staff of Milliken Brothers in New York.

In Phoenixville he prepared the detailing of many structural steel buildings for shop fabrication, including: Grand Opera House, Syracuse, N. Y.; Washington Opera House, Washington, D. C.; World Building, N. Y.; Union Trust Building, Philadelphia,; Boston Public Library,; Brooklyn Post Office,; House of Refuge, Glen Falls, N. Y.; Orphan Asylum, Washington, D. C.; Amphitheatre Roof, Madison Square Garden, N. Y.; Inter-Ocean Building, Washington, D. C.; Bridgeport Post Office,; Hart Building Apartment House, Boston,; Massachusetts State House, Boston,; U. S. Post Office, Charlotte, S.C.; City Hall, Lowell, Mass., Hall of Records, San Bernadino, Cal.; National Insurance Building, Washington, D. C.; U. S. Post Office, Sacramento, Cal.; Hunting & Broad Top R. R. Shops,; Mather Building, Cleveland, O.; and he had full charge of the Betts Building, Philadelphia,; Masonic Temple Roof, Baltimore,; and roof of the Fox Hotel, Philadelphia.

At Pencoyd Iron Company he had responsible charge of the structural parts of Charleston Post Office, S.C.; Reading Terminal, Philadelphia,; Hotel Metropolis, Philadelphia,; Union Trust Building, St. Louis,; Pier Shed #14 N.Y. City,; Bellefontaine Bridge Approach Viaduct,; Draw Bridge, Dutch Kills, L.I.R.R.; and the Baugh Building and Odd Fellows Hall, Philadelphia.

With Milliken Brothers from 1893 to 1901 he had responsible charge of designs, estimates, details and erection and export sales in New York territory as Contracting Engineer.

Steel structures administered by him include, Lawyers Title Building Roof, Maiden Lane, N.Y.; Ocean Grove Auditorium; Troop "A" Armory, 94<sup>th</sup> Street and Madison Avenue, N.Y.; Hotel Renaissance Annex,; New York Clearing House, N.Y.; Brooklyn Driving Club,; Siegle-Cooper Building, N.Y.; Morgenthau Building, N.Y.; Polhemus Memorial Clinic, Brooklyn; Commercial Cable Building, N.Y.; Heide Building, Vandam St, N.Y.; Queen Insurance

Building, N.Y.; Milliken Brothers Shops and Craneways, Brooklyn; Napanock Reformatory, Ulster County, N.Y.; Dunn Building, Broadway & Reade Street, N.Y.; St. George Hotel, Brooklyn; Hoffman Hall Theological Seminary, N.Y.; Mill Buildings, Honolulu; some of which involved both architectural and engineering designs and supervision.

In 1901 he began private practice as Engineer and Architect at 29 Broadway, N.Y. Among other structures designed and supervised by him were: Warren Foundry & Machine Company at Phillipsburg, N.J. included the 60 inch Pipe Foundry, Power House, Dipping House, Machine Shop and Foundry "F" extensions.

Lehigh Valley Railroad Locomotive Repair Shops at Sayre, Pa. included the Locomotive Shop, Store House, Blacksmith Shop, and Power House, consisting of 6000 tons of steel in Buildings covering 11 acres of ground.

Lidgerwood Manufacturing Company at Newark, N.J. consisted of the Foundry, Pattern Shop and Power House covering 10 acres of ground and including design and contracting for the entire plant exclusive of equipment. Also, for this company, studies were made for remodeling the old plant in Brooklyn.

The De La Vergne Machine Company, Erecting Shop at East 138<sup>th</sup> Street, N.Y.

The Gifford-Wood Company at Hudson, N.Y. included the layout, plans and supervision of the Office Building, Carpenter Shop, Smith Shop, Machine Shop, Store House and Shipping Room, complete ready for machines.

Alsen's American Portland Cement Company at Alsen, N.Y.: 50000 Barrel reinforced concrete Stock House, Clinker Bins and reconstruction of old Stock House.

Harlan & Hollingsworth Corporation, Car Shops at Wilmington, Del.

Perth Amboy Power House.

Columbian Steam Laundry, Newark, N.J.

National Storage Company, Black Tom reconstruction estimates.

U. S. Government Freight Terminals for B.R.T. Brooklyn.

Gifford-Wood Company, Hudson, N.Y. Structural Shop.

Nine Story Building, 17 East 48 Street, N.Y.

Cranford, N. J. Cleveland School.

Garwood, N. J. Franklin School.

Cranford, N.J. Lincoln School.

Roselle Park, N.J. High School.

Panama Canal, Gatun Locks, Cableway system for handling cement, sand, stone and concrete, largest in the world.

Layout and estimates for Ship Terminals and Warehouses and freight handling- at Clifton, S.I.; and for the National Wharf & Warehouse Company, Jersey City, N.J.

Ship Yard designs and layout at Rockaway, N.Y. for building U.S. 150 foot ocean going steel tugs.

Booth Steamship Company at Manaus, Brazil, cableway and pontoons for unloading ships.

Union Ballast Company, Shop Building, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Hamilton, Ontario, layout and estimates for Spinning Mill.

MomtauK Theatre, Brooklyn, inspection and reconstruction and many other designs and estimates of engineering structures and mechanical devices during 18 years as consulting engineer for the Lidgerwood Manufacturing Company and the design of electric sign structures for the O. J. Gude Co.

During 1917 he spent much time in designing concrete ships and barges, as a war measure. He has one of the first concrete ship designs in the U. S. Bureau of Standards. He also designed harbor barges and lighters of concrete.

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He went into the supply of house shortage for industrial need and took charge of extensive terminal work in Brooklyn under the U. S. Army control.

In 1918 he was asked to serve on the Township Committee of Cranford, N.J. and in 1919 was elected to that office. In 1921 he gave up his private practice to become Township Engineer and Town Manager. He launched a county wide park movement of great local benefit. He remodeled the center of town, removing two dangerous railroad grade crossings; compiled the first building laws, redeemed overloaded sewers, eliminated poor drainage, designed and supervised street improvements, new sewers and promoted improvement in Utility services and general town planning.

In 1932 the major needs of the town were taken care of pretty well, the depression continued, unemployment increased, municipal finances were crippled, taxes were not paid, and the position of Township Engineer was declared vacant.

He was admitted to full membership in the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1901.

*[Notes: L.I.R.R. = Long Island Rail Road. B.R.T = Brooklyn Rapid Transit (subway)]*

### **Musical Autobiography of D. C. Newman Collins**

Beginning at the age of fifteen years, 1882, he began to play piano in Haddonfield, N.J. with his brother Thomas J. Collins, clarinet and G. Fred Collins violin, and afterwards took up violin. About 1883 he and his brother organized a local orchestra in which he was leader and first violin. He purchased a trombone in 1885, joined the Vesper Orchestra in Camden, N.J. in 1886. He also joined the famous Jennings 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment Band in 1886 in Camden playing slide trombone and in 1887 was appointed as delegate to the Chicago convention of the National League of Musicians as member of the Board of Appeals and Grievances.

While acting as chief of the Haddon Fire Company he was musical director of many minstrel shows to raise money for a new fire truck and firemen's equipment, playing violin and piano.

In 1889 he joined the Phoenix Military Band in Phoenixville, Pa., in which he played trombone and in concerts he was accompanist on piano. Here he also worked up minstrel shows for the benefit of a hospital. In these shows he was violin player and accompanist. This lasted until 1892.

In 1893 he was elected active member of the Symphony Society of Philadelphia, W.W. Gilchrist, conductor, playing trombone in many concerts in Music Fund Hall and in the Academy of Music.

In 1894 he joined the Thiesen Amateur Orchestra in Greenville, N.J. playing trombone and doing the accompanying on the piano. He was also secretary. This association lasted until 1898.

In 1895 he became pianist with the Hayden Sextet Club of Bayonne and Greenville, composed of Adrian Primrose, violin, Henry Harrison, violin; Richard H. Schmidt, viola; William Krunschied, cello; Arthur W. Small, flute and D. C. Newman Collins, piano. A very capable and enjoyable association that lasted until 1903.

In 1900 he joined the German Leiderkranz Orchestra of 70 pieces in New York City and played trombone with them until 1907.

From 1907 on he enjoyed chamber music at home, playing piano trios with his family. He took up cello about 1908 and played in public only occasionally in the Rotary Club of Cranford.

## Yachting Autobiography of D. C. Newman Collins

When very young he and his brother Thomas J. Collins spent every available minute at Chestnut Neck (near Port Republic) New Jersey, on their Grand Father's farm, on Mullica River. They made and sailed toy boats and one day found a small boat on the river bank, water logged and abandoned. They rigged it up with a bed sheet sail and went flying down the river with the wind, but not having a centerboard, they sorrowfully walked home, leaving their prize which could not be made to sail or tack against the wind.

Each summer from 1880 on, they would hire any sort of boat they could find, garvey, yacht, skiff or sneak box, in which they would cruise. Their natural feeling about yachting was that boats were made to go somewhere rather than to sail up and down in front of the house.

Port Republic is located five miles up the crooked Nacote Creek. From the mouth of this creek it is five miles on Mullica River to Great Bay, which is nine miles across, east and west, to the beach thoroughfares, which lead on through crooked channel to Island Beach, Sea Haven, Brigantine Beach and Atlantic City. This was their field of action. Many of the boats hired had to be re-rigged and caulked to make them seaworthy.

Island Beach is an island two miles long in Little Egg Harbor Inlet. A hotel had been built but was abandoned because of the inaccessibility of the island, and Elmer Channels and family went over every week to live in it for occupancy and upkeep. These vacation trips were always welcomed by Elmer and their stock of grub was thrown into the kitchen and that was all there was to it.

Around 1885 he usually picked up a few friends for these outings and managed to get over to the beaches on every trip regardless of the weather conditions.

These cruises occurred every summer until 1893, the later ones being longer cruises in the 40 foot sloop "Manie" owned by Captain Jimmy Endicott, usually to Atlantic City for a few days, living on board, then out to sea to Barnegat Inlet, to Toms River and Island Heights and returning down the bay, stopping at small towns, about a two weeks trip in all kinds of weather.

Some of the boats used were garveys; the 12 foot open skiff "Little Jewel" was used; the yacht "Chestnut", yacht "Trotwood", all open boats, the cabin yacht "Josie" and the sloop "Manie".

At Seahaven all building material has to be brought by boat and other emergency things had to be brought by boat. This, and the unloading, docking and handling of building supplies were among the duties of Mr. Collins.

Such an early training in mooring, sailing, rigging and managing boats and using all kinds of weather conditions for motive power supplies a knowledge of natural things and a respect for the need of making preparation for trouble before it comes. The experience in taking advantage of every little puff of wind and trimming sails to inch through this crooked creek faster than these experienced baymen, proved of value in late racing and indeed in general engineering ability to understand the solution of unusual problems later.

A small schooner owned by Captain Ene Smith used to take wood and oysters to New York and bring coal on the return to Port Republic. He lost no opportunity to tie up his boats behind and sail this schooner down the creek and river to return in his own boat. It required some skill to turn this big schooner in the narrow bends of the creek in a heavy wind.

Port Republic was a town of oystermen who lived in the bay most of the time, living on their boats while working oysters. Every Monday morning, with the rattle of blocks, heaving of anchors and amplified conversation, this fleet of sail boats would start down the creek for the bay, very often accompanied by Mr. Collins either on board or in his own boat.

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There were many happy incidents in test contacts. In crossing the bay it seemed natural that his small boat should stop off among the oystermen, tie up, eat a few oysters, tell some stories and go on. In case of trouble their boats were always a haven for the night or longer and sometimes Mr. Collins would sail with them.

Many times these little boats would openly start down with the fleet with the object of beating them to "Cape Horn", one of their principal oyster grounds, along the north shore of the bay, and many humorous events were brought about which created mutual interest between the amateurs and professionals and respect for the little fellow.

At Sea Haven, the northerly point of Little Egg Harbor Inlet, while his employers were building a hotel, cottages and docks, in 1886, he would sail the small yacht used to bring supplies and passengers from Leeds Point, a pretty wet trip and one in which his sailing ability was tested.

In New York Bay in 1893 he bought the cup winning open yacht "Lizzie V" from Penn Vreeland of Greenville. She was a narrow, big rigged yacht with lots of ballast and moving sand bag ballast. Very capable if properly handled. She won the pennant in her class on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1896 in the regatta of the Bayonne Rowing Associations and led her class in every event.

In 1902 five friends in Bayonne N.J. agreed to design, build and sail a boat of their own in a series of races for a silver cup. The only restrictions being a fourteen foot limit of length and a \$25.00 limit of cost. This was done to assure personal work and avoid the possibility of hiring professional labor. The five were: Frank N. L'Estrange, druggist; Frank Davis, custom broker; Stephen L. Cummings, Manager; J. St. John Claremont, Manufacturing optician, 45<sup>th</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, N.Y.; and D. C. Newman Collins, civil engineer.

After much newspaper notoriety and conspiracy the boats were launched. The Collins boat, "Allegro"; won the first three races. The first race on June 14<sup>th</sup> was won by one minute in a northeast blow. The second race on June 22<sup>nd</sup> was sailed in a dead calm wherein "Allegro" was the only boat to finish within the time limit. The third race on June 28<sup>th</sup> was won by "Allegro" by 3 minutes, 11 seconds.

The cup was won and named the "Allegro Cup" and was to be defended against all challenges. The boats were named; "Bonita", Davis; "Allegro", Collins; "Freyja", L'Estrange; "Fanite". Claremont; "Little Doris", Cummings.

In the challenge races for defending the the cup, the first was sailed on July 26<sup>th</sup> in a howling easterly gale, only "Allegro", "Bonita" and "Freyja" starting. Freyja sunk, Bonita goose-winged her sail, breaking her boom and Allegro won the race in 1 hour 42 minutes and 45 seconds, the only boat to finish.

The second race in defending the cup was sailed on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, in a light puffy wind. Bonita won by 2 minutes. Bonita had unexpectedly appeared with a much larger sail.

The third race was sailed on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1902, Allegro has put on an extra jib, making a sloop rig, and won the race by 1 minute, 56 seconds.

The fourth and last race, on September 13<sup>th</sup>, was won by Allegro by 1 minute, 38 seconds.

In all it was a unique and interesting test of seamanship. The fleet was called the "Bayonne Mosquito Navy".

In 1904 he bought the 34 foot cabin sloop "Thordis" from Boston. Thordis was built by C.C. Hanley and was the flagship of the Winthrop Yacht Club of Boston. She had a record of 14 first prizes in 15 starts, in Buzzards Bay. When she was sailed down from Boston she became the flagship of the Pavonia Yacht Club in New York Bay and Mr. Collins was the Read-Admiral of the club. She outclassed and beat every boat of the 35 that were listed in the club.

Her racing record was unusual, on May 30<sup>th</sup> 1904 she, unprepared to enter the open regatta of that day, having eleven men, women and children on board and was towing a tender.

She was lying off her mooring to see the race when the Commodore came off and asked the skipper to start her at least in order to make up another class. She started and finished first boat in the fleet and had sail down, ready to go ashore when the next boat in her class arrived.

On July 16<sup>th</sup> 1904, the 36<sup>th</sup> annual regatta of the Pavonia Yacht Club, over a course of 30 miles, out the narrows and off to Coney Island point and return, Thordis won in her class by 7 minutes and was the first boat in the fleet to finish, beating "Forsyth" (10 feet longer than Thordis) by 9 minutes corrected time.

Labor Day regatta of the Pavonia Yacht Club was sailed on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1904, Thordis won again, beating the next boat in her class 1 hour, 1 minute.

In the first regatta in 1905 sailed on June 10<sup>th</sup>, Thordis won by 11 minutes, 2 seconds.

On June 30<sup>th</sup> Thordis sailed a private race for \$100.00 a side under challenge by a crack yacht from Bridgeport named the "Bradley". The Commodore and officers of the club urged Mr. Collins to sail Thordis in the race in defense of the club honor. Thordis won over a 34 mile course to Sandy Hook, to Coney Island and return, by 11 minutes, 30 seconds.

The first regatta on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1906 of Pavonia Yacht Club, Thordis beat the next boat by 4 minutes, 12 seconds, over an 8 mile course. The Thordis has a 16 foot power tender with a single cylinder Palmer engine in it and on this same day the "Duke" took a prize in the power boat race and captured the pennant.

After moving to Cranford, Thordis was sold to Commodore Dawes of the Wallaston Yacht Club of Boston, in 1909, and she was second champion in the Marblehead races for two years thereafter. The new racing rules and measurements handicapped her in further victories.

In 1915, Mr. Collins built a sea skiff call "Spindrift", a 24 foot open power boat of great seaworthiness and having a speed of 8 miles an hour. The skiff was used at Ocean Gate together with a cottage rented by the family for several summers. Many fishing and party trips were enjoyed and much off shore fishing was done. She was sold in 1923.

In 1927 another 24 foot sea skiff was built by Seabright Dory Works of Long Branch, equipped like Spindrift and having the same speed, called "Skipper". During the four years to 1931 this skiff was used all along the New Jersey coast.

The two skiffs Spindrift and Skipper were tied up at different places and would be picked up from Cranford by automobile and used for local fishing trips from these various points. Two years at Ocean Gate and Island Heights; three years at Beach Haven; two years at West Creek; one year at Great Bay and Mullica River and Absecon; two years at Seawaren, North Jersey; and one year at WaterWitch near Sandy Hook.

In 1931, Skipper was traded in and a new modern skiff, "Lady Luck" was built by the keyport Skiff Works at Keyport, N.J. equipped with a 70 h.p. Universal motor. She was 26 feet long and had a speed of 16 miles per hour. She berthed at Water Witch for many years, did much ocean fishing and made an annual cruise along the south Jersey coast.

Each of the sea skiffs were fitted with a folding "McClellan" spray hood which enclosed two thirds of the boat in a closed cabin.

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*[Transcribed by Gary S. Collins from notes typewritten by D. C. N. Collins probably in the late 1930's. Copyright Gary S. Collins, 2003]*