

(Letter from Nell Downing (Norton) to Glenn Dillard Gunn, 11 Jun 1941. Transcribed by Gary S. Collins in 2002 from a copy made by CNDN soon after the letter was sent.)

New London, Missouri
June 11, 1941

Mr. Glenn Dillard Gunn
Washington - Times Herald
Washington, D.C.

For years I have heard -- do not know the source -- that we are descended from the same ancestor, and, since you have "Dillard" in your name, I wonder if you have "Dillard" and "Collins" ancestry.

To introduce myself, I am the daughter of the late Dr. T. J. Downing and Sarah Campbell (Hays) Downing, who is a sister of Charles Thomas Hays, Judge of Missouri's Supreme Court.

We are descended from the Peter Montague family of Virginia through the line of Sarah Montague who married John Stevens and had Nancy Stevens who married Joseph Duncan, who had Sarah Montague Duncan who married Dillard Collins and came to Clark County, Kentucky, near Winchester. It is supposed Dillard Collins and Sarah Montague Duncan were married in Orange Co., Virginia, since she was born in that county.

I was in Winchester, Clark Co., Kentucky last September and had a delightful time going over old records, but did not get to stay long enough to get all I wished. Dillard Collins' son, Willis Collins, was County Clerk of Clark County, and a lovely oil painting of him now hangs in their present County Clerk's Office. He was a fine looking gentleman.

Are you descended from "Dillard Collins", and if you are, can you tell me anything of the Collins family history -- the place of his birth, his parents and his brothers and sister? D.A.R. records on a descendant state he was born in 1760. I know he died in 1821 for I saw the inventory of his estate in the Clark County Court Records. I have much data on Dillard Collins after he came to Clark County, but very little before.

Can you tell me whether or not he was in the Revolution. It is said he was a Colonel in the war of 1812, but I do not have this record.

As you can see by the chart enclosed, I am descended from the daughter, Sarah Dillard Collins who married George Campbell Hays Sr. and had Geo. Campbell Hays Jr. who married Mary Jane Wise [*"W" is unclear and may be another letter*] and had Sarah Campbell Hays who married Dr. T. J. Downing.

The "Dillard" has been carried down as a middle name in Sarah Dillard Collins Hays' descendants to the present generation.

Can you tell me if a Dillard married a Collins and had a son "Dillard Collins".

I believe Coz. Christopher Bell's widow knew your mother, or some relative in Galveston, Texas. You will note Nancy Collins married Thos. Ballinjn Bell and went to Texas. Christopher was Nancy's son. I think she wrote me that your Leila Collins' father was a Doctor. I wonder if you are a great-grandson, or a grandson of Dr. John Dillard Collins, son of Dr. Orville Collins, brother of my Sarah Dillard Collins Hays.

I have a great deal of data and will be glad to share it with you, and hope you will also be able to help me. Any data will be greatly appreciated. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience in replying.

Sincerely,
(signed Nell Downing Norton
(Mrs. Voris R. Norton)
New London, Mo.)

I found your address in a Who's Who in St. Louis Public Library. We knew you were in Chicago at one time.

Montague -- Stevens -- Duncan -- Collins Genealogy Line

Peter Montague of Orange Co., Va. -- (desc. From Peter Montague who was born in England 1603 -- to Virginia in 1621 and rep. Lancaster and Nansemond Cos. In Virginia H. of B. have complete line N.D.N.)

Married Anthonit _____
and had Sarah Montague who m. John Stevens;
and Elizabeth Montague who m. James Daniel.

John Stevens and Sarah (Montague) Stevens had among others;

Nancy Stevens who married Joseph Duncan, and had among others;

Sarah Montague Duncan who married Dillard Collins (b.1760 d.1821)

(Joseph Duncan and Nancy came to Clark Co., Ky. As did their children. Sarah Montague Duncan and Dillard Collins married in Virginia in 1789 and their children were (not according to birth N.D.N.)

Willis Collins who m. 5-21-1818 Mary P. Taylor (a widow)
Evelyn Collins born 1792, m. David Smith 5-23-1811
Joseph Collins m. 1821 Maria Dodge
Nancy Collins b. 2-17-1796 m. 4-15-1818 to Thos. Ballinjn Bell
Orville Collins m. 10-6-1819 Mary Christie (born 1797)
Maria Collins m. 4-16-1818 Joseph M. Walker
Talitha Collins m. James Monroe
Sarah Dillard Collins b. 6-5-1802, m. 12-28-1824 to George Campbell Hays
(ancestors of Nell D. Norton)
Ann Collins m. 12-27-1824 Thos. H. Hind
Emily Collins married _____ Pratt
John S. Collins
Elizabeth Collins married Judge Ben. Clinton Totten

Emily Pratt had two children Ann and Tom. She died in Hopkinsville, Ky.

Nancy Collins Bell moved to Texas.

Elizabeth Collins Totten to Arkansas.

Talitha Collins Monroe to Miss. (died in Miss. family record)

Evelyn Collins Smith to Illinois

Maria Collins Walker to Ill.

Ann Collins Hind to Missouri.

Sarah Dillard Collins Hays to Tenn., thence to New London, Mo.

Who were the parents of Dillard Collins? His brothers and sisters? Where was he born? D.A.R. records of a descendant of Joseph Duncan Rev. S^o1., through Evelyn Collins Smith, say Dillard Collins born 1760. He died in 1821 in Clark Co., Ky. I have much data on Dillard Collins after he came to Ky.

Sarah Dillard Collins married George Campbell Hays. They went to Adair Co., Ky., where the Hays family had been since 1801, coming there from Rockbridge Co., Va., where Geo Campbell Hays was born in 1794, the son of Charles Hays and Mary Campbell Walker.

Geo. C. Hays and Sarah Dillard Collins Hays had among others;

George Campbell Hays Jr. who was born in Monroe, Overton Co., Tenn. in 1828 -- they came to New London, Ralls Co., Mo. in 1835 where Geo C. Hays Sr., was a pioneer merchant and landed proprietor with slaves.

Geo. C. Hays Jr. married Mary Jane Wise, descended from William Briggs, William Wroe, through the son Original Wroe (Roe); Richard and Original Browne, Henry Brookes; Abraham and John Shotwell; Hugh and John Cowperthwaite; John Adams, Adam Wise; etc.

Sarah Campbell Hays b. 1859 married Dr. Thos. J. Downing, descended from Joris Jansen de Rapelje, French Huguenot; Marten Ryerson; Gov. John Reading of the New Jersey Colony; Thomas Brown; Ezekiel Downing (whose father William Downing came from North of Ireland. Darby Shawhan.

Marjorie Nell Downing born 6-26-1887 married Voris Rariden Norton, who died 1932.

Nell Downing Norton, since 1936, has been living with her widowed mother, Sarah Campbell Hays Downing, in New London, Missouri.

(from Nell Downing Norton's records)