

New London, Missouri
January 23, 1942

Mrs. D. C. N. Collins
232 Walnut Avenue
Cranford, New Jersey

Dear Cousin Rosalie:

I was delighted to hear from you and am so glad to know your interest and willingness to cooperate in getting our family history. If your sister in Frankfort is able, it may be she may find more of interest, since the Kentucky State Historical Society has a wealth of material in their Library. I doubt if their records would show any more on our Dillard Collins, however, for I think I have about all in my own research except his 1812 War record and his Revolutionary record.

I tried to go over the old Order Books at Winchester in Clark County to see if he were in these wars after coming to Clark; but the books were not indexed and my head was "pulsing" so from the material I had already copied that I could not scan each page as it would have been necessary. All the clerks did not write as beautiful a hand as did Willis Collins, brother of your Orville and my Sarah Dillard Collins. I had a detachment of the retina in my right eye three years ago, and although they say I can read all I wish, I do know that the old writing does strain my good eye; so I did not dare make a search of those un-indexed books.

You will enjoy the pictures I am enclosing; my camera was not in good order (a fact I did not know until my return to St. Louis) but you can tell about it anyway. The Dillard Collins farm is really not on such a slope as it looks, for I did not hold the camera straight.

Another cousin – Lucinda Smith Hubbell, wife of Jay Broaddus Hubbell who has the Chair of English at Duke University, Durham, N.C., - has been to Richmond., Virginia and saw a photostatic copy of the will of two of our immigrant ancestors - Peter Montague, will dated 1659 whose writing she says is beautiful - and Meindort Doodes, whose writing looked like old Dutch script, and which she said she would not have been able to read had she not been familiar with its text.

I shall be so glad to receive the names of Dr. Orville Collins' children, with their marriages and the known descendants.

At long last I have typed the material to send you. This will give you a rough outline of what I am doing. It seems such a coincidence and most interesting to know your son is called "Dillard" and to know he is a "Collins" on each side, although not related lines.

I have worked so over our family records that all our ancestors seem as familiar to me as if they belonged to my own generation, and I have some human interest stories that make them live.

There was a Dillard Collins who was a wagon conductor in the Revolution, from Virginia; and a Dillard Collins who was in North Carolina during the Revolution. I am still writing to various people trying to find out about this, but have nothing definite as yet.

I do not know the name of your Mother nor Father; and presume you are descended from Elizabeth Hatchett the first wife of Dr. John. D. Is that true?

I am sending copy of material to Glenn Dillard Gunn, as also a set of the pictures.

Am sorry I have been so long getting this together for you and I hope you will get as much pleasure out of it as I do in sending it to you. Genealogical research is a most fascinating hobby.

Cordially,

Your cousin

(Signed) (Mrs. V.R.) Nell Downing Norton

Encs.

[Note: The Dr. John D. referenced is John Dillard Collins, father of Jessie Paralee Collins, herself mother of Rosalie Furman. I have no knowledge of a second wife. The first wife was Elvira Hatchitt, not Elizabeth as stated in the letter. GSC]