

by Guyot in honor of Robert Collins, a man whom the Princeton scientist declared to be the best authority on the mountains of the Great Smoky Range.

Robert Collins was born in 1806 in what is now Swain County, but which during his lifetime was destined to be Buncombe, Haywood, Jackson, and Swain. He married Elizabeth Beck, daughter of John Beck, who came from Holland and settled near where the Collinses were living. She also lived in Haywood, Jackson, and Swain, without ever changing her place of residence.

Two memorials in the borders of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park will immortalize the name of Robert Collins, Mount Collins and Collins Gap. His life was that of a quiet farmer living peacefully on the banks of this rushing mountain stream. Fame came to him unsought and undreamed of. He was called for a service which he rendered to the best of his ability, and two monuments more enduring than brass or stone perpetuate his name.

He died in 1862 rendering another service of a different type. When the Civil War came on in 1861, he was beyond the age of enlistment, but he was a Confederate soldier in spirit. In 1862, he was called upon by Colonel W. H. Thomas, who was in command of the Sixty-ninth Regiment, to lead a company of sappers and miners, about forty of them, in building a road for military purposes across the Great Smoky Mountains from the North Carolina side into East Tennessee. While working on the road from the Tennessee side, he was taken with a cold, which developed into pneumonia, carried home where he soon afterward died.

**JOSEPH A. COLLINS.** One of the sons of Robert Collins, Joseph A. Collins, some time after the close of the Civil War, came to Haywood County to live. He was born at the old Collins home on the Oconalufy river in what is now Swain County, May 22, 1843. He now (1935) lives on Highway No. 10 one mile west of Clyde in a brick house, which he bought in 1887.

His education was limited to the training which he received in the public schools of the days immediately preceding the opening of the Civil War, six months in Fort Worth, Texas, after the war, and some time at Holly Springs, Macon County, after he returned from Texas.

He was working on his father's farm in the spring of 1861 when the news came that the Civil War had begun. He at once left the farm, joined Company B, Twenty-fourth North Carolina Regiment, and was soon off to the seat of war.

In some of the most desperate battles of the war, particularly the Seven Days Battle around Richmond, he escaped unhurt, until in the bloody assault upon Malvern Hill at night on the last day of the campaign, he received a serious wound and was sent home for recuperation. Later, he was transferred to Thomas' Legion with the rank of first lieutenant and served with that command in Western North Carolina until the close of the war. He was in command of Company A, Sixty-ninth Regiment, when the war closed.

Following the close of the war, he spent two years in Fort Worth, Texas, where he went to school six months and taught school one year. He returned to North Carolina and attended school for some months at Holly Springs, Macon County. He abandoned the idea of becoming a teacher after his short experience in Texas. He became a traveling salesman, made a big success of it, and, with the money he had accumulated, bought the farm on which he is now (1935) living. He has never had much to do with the politics of Haywood County, but once he was called upon to serve the county in the State Legislature, and made a good record in the General Assembly of 1901.

On November 9, 1875, he married Hattie V. McKee, of Jackson County. Eight children were reared, as follows: Nellie, who married J. R. Smathers, of Clyde; Mattie, who married O. L. Smathers; Fay, who married J. V. Holcombe; Robert, Herbert, Edward, Ray, and Benjamin.