

Enos Collins born 1774, son of Hallet Collins, one of the original proprietors of the Township of Liverpool.

He amassed a fortune in shipbuilding, privateering and trading.

In 1808 he commanded a fine brig on avoyage to St. Domingo, when Capt. Joseph Burnaby was his chief mate. On his outward voyage, he unloaded flour and dried cod at Antigua, reloaded his brig with coffee and sugar and rum (all of which were running low in the black kingdom of Hayti owing to internal political and industrial dissentiens), got in touch with King Christeff of that Island of Misrule and made a deal. Those who are acquainted with the history of that beautiful but badly governed island will easily perceive how highly remunerative this was. The monopoly of the coffee trade, which was then in the hands of the Chamber of Commerce of that island was then managed by King Christeff.

Henri Christophe, (a negro slave, born in Grenada, Oct. 6, 1767, and bought his freedom) played a prominent part in the insurrection against the French in 1803. He became chief military commander, 1804-06, under Dessalines, Emperor of Haiti. Appointed President for life of the republic of Haiti in 1806, in 1811 he declared himself king as Henry I and was crowned June 2, 1812. Deposed in 1819 and deserted by his troops, he shot himself Oct. 8, 1820. See Black Majesty by John W. Vandercock, 1928.

PP. 11



Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia

Ancient Free and Accepted Masons
Halifax, - Nova Scotia

REGINALD V. HARRIS, K.C.
PAST GRAND MASTER
GRAND SECRETARY

FREEMASONS' HALL, HALIFAX, N. S.

Dec. 4

1950

Dr. T.H. Raddall
Liverpool, N.S.

My dear Dr. Raddall:

I had a letter recently from J.A. Winfield, of Halifax, who as you know lives in Bermuda during the winter months. When here in September he asked me to run down a story relating to the Hon. Enos Collins and more recently I asked him to make a memorandum for me of as much as he could remember of the story. It is rather interesting. I enclose copy of his memorandum. I have done some preliminary research and find that Collins was certainly a friend of King Christoff. I am purchasing the book "Black Majesty" referred to in a memorandum which I have attached to Mr. Winfield's memorandum. Have you ever heard of this story and have you any suggestions as to where I might pursue my researches?

Kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

Reginald V. Harris

RVH:ES
Encl.

The story in brief that early in the 1800's probably 1820 there was a lot of talk about an uprising in San Domingo and the French decided they had better get out. They engaged two ships, one captained by Collins, the other by an American, on which to transport themselves and their goods and chattels to a more serene clime.

The ship was loaded and ready to sail; the night before sailing they had a blowout ashore intending to embark in the morning. That night the uprising took place and they were all massacred. No one escaped. The ship put to sea. The American turned his cargo over to the American Govt. for the benefit of any heirs who might appear. Collins having no owners for his cargo ~~appropriated~~ appropriated it to his own use, this forming the base of his fortune. Personally, I cannot vouch for any of this, but I have met in San Domingo a lady whose mother was in France at the time, she being a child or may be it was her grandmother; at any rate she confirmed at least part of the story and when grown up ~~xxx~~ and the troubles were over returned to San Domingo and is now keeping a guest house in the home of her forefathers. She calls her house the Hotel Splendide.

The Collins family may have some papers. Some may be in the Provincial Archives and possibly Washington may have something stored away.

I am afraid this is all I can tell you, but I would like to know what information the Archives have on the history of old man Collins. (Enos). He started the Halifax Banking Co. This is about the limit of my information.

J.H.W.

December 5th, 1950

Mr. R.V. Harris, K.C.,
Box 522,
Halifax, N.S.

Dear Mr. Harris,

Thanks for your letter and the very interesting enclosures. I'm afraid I cannot add anything to the information you have already regarding Enos Collins and his deal with Christophe. Old tradition in Liverpool, related to me by the late Robert Long, declared that Collins (far from taking coffee, sugar and rum to Haiti) struck up a friendship with Christophe (probably by supplying him with arms) and for years enjoyed almost a monopoly of the coffee trade out of Haiti. This fits the known facts of that time. The original black rising was in '91, when many of the white planters were slaughtered or driven out. Then the British, seeing an opportunity to seize the richest French colony in the West Indies, sent a fleet and army to Haiti. The yellow fever slew them in thousands and eventually they got out. Then Napoleon sent a strong force to restore French authority, under General LeClerc, but these suffered the same fate, with the addition of several military disasters in fighting the blacks.

Up to this time the black leader had been Toussaint, a wise and able Negro who knew the value of reconciling the remaining white planters if Haiti was to prosper under black rule. Then the brutal Negro, Dessalines, took charge, and as soon as the French troops left the island he carried out a general massacre of the whites. This must have been the time of the incident Winfield mentions, when the last of the whites were trying to get away, in 1803. Many of the French planters in Haiti had become rich, and a ship-load of their possessions would have been a most valuable prize to Collins or any of the other shadowy figures (mostly described as "American") who were engaged in trading with the blacks.

After the whites were eliminated, the war in Haiti became a bloody struggle between the pure blacks under Christophe, who were strong in the north, and the mulattoes, who held the south. To get arms and munitions Christophe had to do business with certain mysterious whites, one of whom was undoubtedly Collins, paying them with cargoes of Haitian produce -- rum, sugar and coffee. It was a risky business because, apart from the vigilant warships of the British squadron, who patrolled the Windward Passage as a safeguard to Jamaica, there was no law or order in Haiti itself; but undoubtedly it paid fat dividends.

In after years, when Collins had become rich and respectable, he kept a very close mouth about these matters and so not much is known. I found an interesting entry in the diary of Archibald MacMechan, dated August 2, 1928, and stating that he "went to the Eastern Trust, where D. MacGillivray allowed me to examine the two letter-books he had taken from the safe of Enos Collins, opened by a man with an acetylene torch." Probably these letters had to do with

business of later years, indeed MacMechan noted a letter dated in the 1830's from Gollins to his mother, about Christmas presents he had sent her; but there is a strong possibility that there may have been references to the Haitian trade, which must have continued until Christophe's fall in 1819. I have often wondered what MacGillivray did with the letter-books. The Archives may have them, or the Laurie family; or perhaps they were destroyed. At any rate they constituted the only clue that Gollins left behind regarding his activities in the first half of his long life.

With every good wish,

Sincerely,



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Halifax, - Nova Scotia

REGINALD V. HARRIS, K.C.
PAST GRAND MASTER
GRAND SECRETARY

FREEMASONS' HALL, HALIFAX, N. S.

Dec. 8 1950

Dr. Thomas H. Raddall

Liverpool, N.S.

Dear Dr. Raddall:

Many thanks for yours of the 5th inst. respecting Enos Collins and his relations with Haiti, and Henri Christophe. I shall follow up the clues that you have given me and will write you again. I think Collins and his exploits would be a thrilling theme for a novel from your pen. I hope that you will write such a book.

With very kind regards and again my thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Reginald V. Harris
Reginald V. Harris

RVH:ES