

Guy N. Collins - IN MEMORIAM

Guy N. Collins, Principal Botanist in the Division of Cereal Crops and Diseases of the Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, died on August 14, 1938, of endocarditis at his home at Lanham, Maryland. He attended Syracuse University but terminated his college career as an under graduate in 1895 to join a survey expedition to Liberia organized by Dr. O. F. Cook for the New York Colonization Society. While in Africa he indulged his interest and perfected his skill in photography, with the result that all of his travels and most of his work is photographically recorded.

On his return to the United States he spent a few months as a freelance botanical collector on the Florida Keys. Shortly after the close of the Spanish-American War, he joined the staff of the Office of Botanical Investigations and Experiments of the U. S. Department of Agriculture as Assistant Botanist, and accompanied Dr. Cook on an exploration of the plant life of the newly acquired island of Puerto Rico. This expedition resulted in the publication by the Smithsonian Institution of the still standard treatise entitled "Economic Plants of Porto Rico."

AUTHOR OF EARLY AVOCADO BULLETIN

Many expeditions to the American tropics followed this trip. While accompanying Dr. Cook on expeditions to Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies for the study of coffee, rubber, and other tropical cultures, Mr. Collins found that the varieties of the avocado were much more numerous and diverse than had been supposed. In developing the culture of avocados it was important that these varieties be canvassed to secure the best types. Of particular interest were the remarkably thick-skinned avocados of Guatemala, which appeared to have previously been overlooked. As a result, the introduction of these varieties into Puerto Rico was undertaken in the hope that they would aid materially in establishing a profitable industry in that island. They have since been used extensively in developing the commercial varieties of this fruit grown in Florida and California. In 1904, a well illustrated report of Mr. Collins' work in this field was published under the title of "The Avocado, a Salad Fruit from the Tropics," at Bureau of Plant Industry Bulletin No. 77. This publication laid the foundation for the widespread interest which later developed in Florida and California, in commercial avocado growing.

Mr. Collins was highly regarded by his colleagues for his absolute honesty and for the objectivity with which he approached all problems whether of a personal or scientific nature. In his death, biological science has lost a great spirit always fired with enthusiastic curiosity on scientific questions and tempered with a reasonableness that can come only with the highest intellectual development.

Mr. Collins is survived by his widow, Christine Collins, and two sons, George Briggs Collins, Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, and Perez Hathaway Collins, of the Engineering Department of the Dye Works Division of the duPont Company. Wilmington, Delaware.