

Holt Collier
Enslaved by Howell Hinds
Served Thomas Hinds and Several other soldiers
9th TX Cavalry

- 1848 (abt) born in Jefferson County, Mississippi to Harrison and Daphney Collier, house slaves of the Hinds family.¹
- 1853 Howell Hinds brought Holt Collier from Jefferson County to his plantation, Plum Ridge, in Washington County, MS.² *“Howell Hinds was much given to sports of the race course and of hunting large game. In the latter, he trained two of his slaves, Marshall and Holt Collier, to become experts.”*³
- 1861 Holt was taken to war in the winter of the first year of war. He was initially with Thomas Hinds, who was a Lieutenant in a battery.
- 1862 April 6 & 7: Holt was wounded in the ankle at the Battle of Shiloh. He indicated such in his Confederate Indigent Servant Pension application.
- 1864 November 30: Served the 9th TX Cavalry during the Battle of Franklin.
- 1868 July 1: Holt married Rose Smith in Washington County, MS.
- 1870 August 20: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Washington County, MS showed a 21-year-old Holt Collie living in close proximity to Thomas Hinds, a planter. Rose Smith, Holt’s wife was in the household next door. Both Holt and Rose were listed as farm hands. They are not listed as being married, although their marriage record stated they had been married for two years by this point! Holt’s parents and some of his siblings were living in households surrounding him as well.⁴

¹ Source:[Holt Collier National Wildlife Refuge | About Us | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service \(fws.gov\)](https://www.fws.gov/nwr/holt-collier-national-wildlife-refuge/about-us)

² The Delta Democrat-Times, Greenville, MS, Friday, 25 Feb 1944, pg. 2 (accessed newspapers.com)

³ Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys, Chapter seven:Post-war recollections, image 289 (accessed newspapers.com) Marshall Collier was born abt 1838 and was most likely Holt Collier’s brother. Marshall had a son he named Holt as well.

⁴ It’s interesting the absence of order in the document. The census enumerator appeared to write names without any semblance of family unit or household

1877

—Quite an interesting game of base ball was played on Tuesday afternoon between Holt Collier's club from Deer creek, and Harry Scott's club of Greenville. The ground was in wretched condition, and a rain stopped the game at the fourth innings, when the Greenville club was a little ahead. Both clubs played remarkably well, and if the condition of the ground had been favorable, it would have been the best game ever played here. The game will be finished on Monday afternoon next, and those who wish to see how colored people handle the ball and bat, will have an opportunity.

5

1879 Accomplished hunter, Holt Collier shot the bear.

General Ferguson, Holt Collier, Tom Finlay and other Nimrods aroused a big bear back of Swift-water yesterday, and Tom and Holt got in the shots that slayed him.

6

1880 June 23: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Washington County, MS showed Holt, a farm laborer, and his wife Rose living with their three children. Living in the home next to the Holt family was the household of Thomas Hinds.

1881 Howell shot and killed an alleged murderer who was “resisting arrest.” Holt was sent out by local White lawmen almost vigilante style. They knew he could hunt, and they knew he didn’t miss and they took advantage of his skill.

⁵ The Weekly Democrat-Times, Greenville, MS, Sat, 25 Aug 1877, pg. 3 (accessed newspapers.com)

⁶ The Weekly Democrat-Times, Greenville, MS, Sat, 23 Aug 1879, pg. 1 (accessed newspapers.com)

A Vicksburg special of the 6th to the N. O. Democrat is as follows :
A white man, supposed to have been Sage, the murderer of the Lott boys, of Floyd, La., was shot and killed this morning on bayou Phalia, twenty miles from Greenville, by Holt Collier, colored, while resisting arrest.

A White man was shot and killed on the 6th inst., on the Bogue Phalia, twenty miles from Greenville, Miss., by Holt Collier, colored, for resisting arrest. The man is supposed to be Sage, the murderer of the Lott boys, of Floyd, La.

1902 November:

Holt Collier made the front page of newspapers all over the county for serving as a hunting guide for President Teddy Roosevelt.



A journalist wrote about the hunt for a hunting journal in 1903. Holt very clearly understood the world around him and what was necessary for not only survival but success. He called himself a “white man’s negro.”

“...the memory of the long talks around the camp-fire at night, when Collier, sitting apart, as he felt that a dependent should, but speaking simply and fearlessly, as became one who knew, despite his color, he was no less of a man than any of the officials or planters or lawyers or brokers about him, told the wonderful story of his life as a ‘white man’s negro’--how at white men’s bidding he had killed white men and had gone unscathed; how he had met

⁷ The Times, Shreveport, LA, Tue, 12 Jul 1881, pg. 1 (accessed newspapers.com)

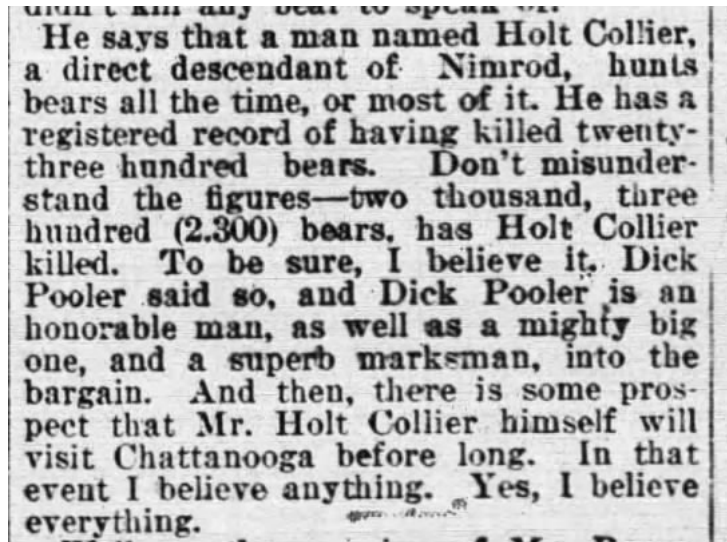
⁸ The Louisiana Sugar-Bowl, New Iberia, LA, Thu, 14 Jul 1881, Pg. 2 (accessed newspapers.com)

⁹ Photo found online on multiple sites, no original source noted.

Union soldiers in hand-to-hand conflict; how he fought off a band of vigilantes that had planned to take his life without just cause."¹⁰

1904 April 24: Married Frances Perkins in Washington County, MS.

1905 Holt Collier and his hunting skills were boasted about in the newspaper.



He says that a man named Holt Collier, a direct descendant of Nimrod, hunts bears all the time, or most of it. He has a registered record of having killed twenty-three hundred bears. Don't misunderstand the figures—two thousand, three hundred (2,300) bears, has Holt Collier killed. To be sure, I believe it. Dick Pooler said so, and Dick Pooler is an honorable man, as well as a mighty big one, and a superb marksman, into the bargain. And then, there is some prospect that Mr. Holt Collier himself will visit Chattanooga before long. In that event I believe anything. Yes, I believe everything.

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1906 When Holt Collier applied for a Confederate pension from the state of Mississippi, former soldiers spoke up for him. He however was not applying for the pension of a soldier, he was applying for the pension of an “indigent servant of a soldier.” This is a very important distinction that was made crystal clear. To get a pension as a servant it had to be proven that you had been a “loyal,” and “well behaved” negro during and since the war. This is very clearly illustrated in the following document *“I know him to be as brave as any living man, not only loyal to the cause, but to the whites ever since, and during our most trying ordeal, Reconstruction.”*

¹⁰ Denison, Lindsay, President Roosevelt's Mississippi Bear Hunt

¹¹ The Chattanooga News, Chattanooga, TN, Sat, 14 Jan 1905, pg. 4 (accessed newspapers.com)

To the Board of Supervisors of Washington County:-

I, with Everman, ~~Mr~~ Robb, Capt. Hunt, and I expect the entire W. A. Percy Camp of U. C. V. , are anxious to have Holt Collier put upon the State pension list, and receive a pension. He is getting old, is in bad health--and is the only negro ever enrolled in our army.

He went out with Colonel Hinds, and at Bowling Green, Ky., joined Captain Evans' Texas Scouts, and remained with him until the end of the struggle.

Colonel Hinds was off on a retreat after a charge, Holt missed him, called for volunteers, re-charged, and brought " Mars Howell " out.

I know him to be as brave as any living man, not only loyal to the cause, but to the whites ever since, and during our most trying ordeal, " Reconstruction."

Our implicit confidence in him was evidenced by our selecting him as body-guard for President Roosevelt on his hunting trip to this section.

Yours truly,

G. M. Helm, Brig. Genl.

By W. W. Everman, Lt. Col. and A. A. Genl. 3rd Brigade Miss Div^s U. C. V

PENSIONERS now on the LIST are NOT required to make new applications, but the CHANCERY CLERK must certify their Names to the Auditor of Public Accounts.

THIS APPLICATION

Must be Filed with the Chancery Clerk on or before the First Monday in September.

(NO APPLICATION WILL BE ENTERTAINED NOT ON THE PRINTED FORM.)

FORM No. 5.

(General Prorate Class.)

APPLICATION of Indigent Servant of Soldier or Sailor of the late Confederacy, under Chapter 73, Acts of 1900.

Applicant must make Answer to all of the following Questions and have it written out Plainly in ink.

- Q. What is your name? Answer..... *Holt Collier* -
- Q. What is your age? Answer..... *about 60 years*
- Q. How long have you been a bona fide resident of Mississippi? Answer..... *Lifetime*
- Q. In what county do you reside? Answer..... *Washington*

erate States? Answer Mississippi

Q. When did you serve in that capacity? Answer during entire war

Q. How long did you serve? Answer during entire war

Q. What was the name of the party whom you served? Answer Lieut, Paul Hinds

Q. What was the name or designation of the company and regiment or vessel in which your owner served?
 Answer Maj. Burns Artillery in which Lieut Paul Hinds served

Q. Where were you at the close of the war? Answer Vicksburg

Q. Were you ever wounded while in actual service? Answer yes

Q. Give date on which you received your wound? Answer do not know exact date

Q. At what place were you wounded? Answer Shilo

Q. What is the nature of your wound? Answer in the ankle

Q. Do you apply for a pension because you are indigent and unable to earn a support by your own labor? Answer yes

Answer I am.
 (Yes or No)

Q. 6. Are you an inmate of Beauvoir Soldiers' Home? Answer No.
 (Yes or No)

Q. 7. What was the date of your enlistment? Answer In the winter of first year of

Q. 8. Give place of your enlistment. " Civil war
 Answer Bowling Green, Ky.

Q. 9. Give the names of the officers of your company, regiment or vessel?
 Answer Company E, Capt. Perry Evans, 9th. Tex Reg. Col. Dudley Jones.

Q. 10. Were you ever discharged from your command? Answer No.
 (Yes or No)

Q. 11. If so, for what cause? Answer _____

Q. 12. Were you in active service at the surrender? Answer Yes
 (Yes or No)

Q. 13. If not, why? Answer _____

Q. 14. Are you **totally** blind? Answer No.
 (Yes or No)

Q. 15. Have you lost both feet or both hands? Answer No.
 (Yes or No)

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1907 Holt Collier again served as hunting guide for President Roosevelt.

1910 April 21: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Greenville, Washington County, MS showed Holt, general game hunter, and Frances, a dressmaker living in their own home, free from mortgage. Frances could read and write but Holt could not.

¹² Mississippi Department of Archives and History
 (<https://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/osa/s1201/collier-combest/detail/390454#dtop>)

1920 January 2: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Greenville, Washington County, MS showed Holt, a huntsman, and Frances living in a rented home.

1926 On two occasions Holt Collier served as an hunting guide for President Roosevelt. He told the tale in the following article.

Col. Roosevelt's Roped Bear Story Told By Holt Collier

GREENVILLE, Miss., Jan. 16.—The Greenville Rotary Club was entertained Thursday by a talk from Holt Collier, who was guide to President Roosevelt at the time of his hunting trips in Mississippi and Louisiana. Collier was born in slavery and is now well advanced in years, but retains his vigor and keenness of mind. He has been a notable hunter in his day and claims that he has killed 3,100 bear. His talk to Rotary was well expressed, and full of quaint humor. When President Francis was about to introduce him to the club, he said: "I know all these men and they all know me." President Francis told of his loyalty and service to the white people of the south in the Civil War and he was heartily applauded as he rose to speak.

"You want to know about Colonel Roosevelt. I cannot think of him without sadness. I was his bodyguard and guide when he was hunting down here and we talked together a great deal. When he came down on his first hunting trip I made all the preparations, taking two months to make roads through the swamps and canebrakes near Smeades and over to the Sunflower River. When his party came and started out for camp he made like he was going off by himself and Mr. Foote asked him why he was going off without his guards. He said that he did not want his guards, they bothered him. He said he would have me for a guard. There were a lot of my friends in the camp, Major Helm, Mr. Leroy Percy, Mr. Magnum, Mr. John Parker of New Orleans, Mr. Foote and others. That first night in camp Colonel Roosevelt said he must see a bear the next day, so after some arguing with the white folks I told him that I would get him a bear if I had to catch one with my lariat and tie him. So I went out next morning early with my dogs and we stirred up a big old bear. The dogs got to fighting him and I tried to scare him up a tree, where we could keep him till Colonel Roosevelt could get there. But he fought back at us. Finally the dogs and me got the bear out into the water of the bayou and they had a terrible fight there and he killed two of my best dogs. Then I got the rope over his head and tied him to a willow tree.

"There were two white men from Smeades with me and I told them to go back to camp and let the colonel know that I had a bear for him. The colonel had been out with some of the men, but they had come back to camp when these young men brought them the news. They were eating, but when they heard that I had a bear they just threw their food away and came as fast as they could. When they got there I pointed to this bear I had tied up and said to the colonel: "Mr. President, there is your bear." He would not shoot a bear that was tied up. So I had one of the other men kill him, for I was afraid he would kill all my dogs if we turned him loose. They would go on fighting him. I got the skin and bleached the skull of this bear for the colonel and he took them home with him."

Collier continued to tell stories of his experiences with President Roosevelt on the Louisiana trip until long after the usual time of adjournment, much to the pleasure of the members of the club who applauded him heartily and pilled him with questions. The people of this part of the state take a great deal of pride in this fine old colored man, who is one of the noblest representatives of his race.

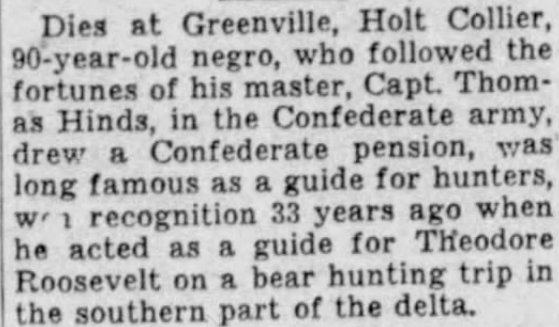
1930 April 10: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Greenville, Washington County, MS showed a retired Holt, living with his wife and a lodger. Holt owned his own home valued at \$3,500. Interestingly, it was indicated on the census that Holt was a veteran of the Civil War. Holt saw himself as a former soldier,

¹³ The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, TN, Sun, 17 Jan 1926, pg. 5 (accessed newspapers.com)

although the Confederate government nor the Confederate Army ever acknowledged him as such.

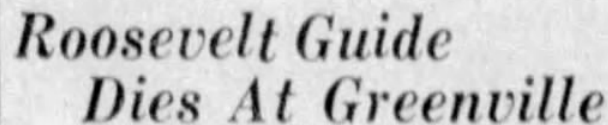
1936 March: Holt was listed on the pension rolls in the newspaper as receiving \$23.25.¹⁴

August 1: Holt Collier died in Greenville, MS.



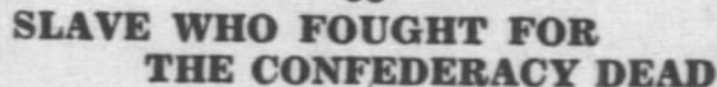
Dies at Greenville, Holt Collier, 90-year-old negro, who followed the fortunes of his master, Capt. Thomas Hinds, in the Confederate army, drew a Confederate pension, was long famous as a guide for hunters, with recognition 33 years ago when he acted as a guide for Theodore Roosevelt on a bear hunting trip in the southern part of the delta.

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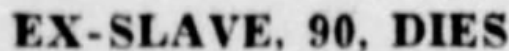
*Roosevelt Guide
Dies At Greenville*

16



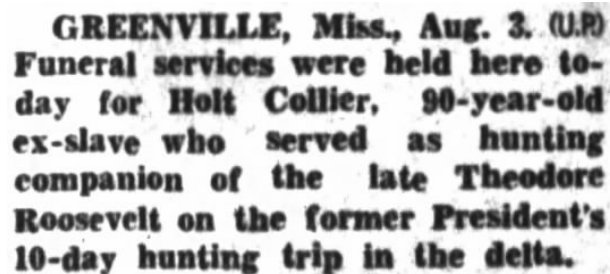
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**SLAVE WHO FOUGHT FOR
THE CONFEDERACY DEAD**

17



EX-SLAVE, 90, DIES

18



GREENVILLE, Miss., Aug. 3. (U.P.)
Funeral services were held here today for Holt Collier, 90-year-old ex-slave who served as hunting companion of the late Theodore Roosevelt on the former President's 10-day hunting trip in the delta.

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¹⁴ The Weekly Democrat-Times, Greenville, MS, Thurs, 14 May 1936, pg. 3 (accessed newspapers.com)

¹⁵ The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, TN, Sun, 9 Aug 1936, pg. 46 (accessed newspapers.com)

¹⁶ The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, TN, Tue, 4 Aug 1936, pg. 11 (accessed newspapers.com)

¹⁷ The Bunkie Record, Bunkie, LA, Fri 7 Aug 1936, pg. 4 (accessed newspapers.com)

¹⁸ The Town Talk, Alexandria, LA, Mon, 3 Aug 1936, pg. 10 (accessed newspapers.com)

¹⁹ The Anniston Star, Anniston, AL, Mon, 3 Aug 1936, pg. 1 (accessed newspapers.com)