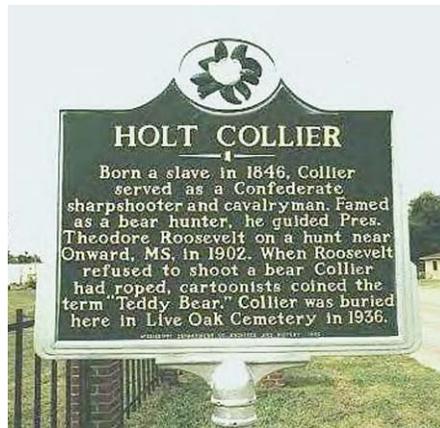


# Holt Collier

*As the years passed, Holt became well known for his bear-hunting ability and is credited with killing over 3,000 bears – more than the number taken by Daniel Boone and Davy Crocket combined.*

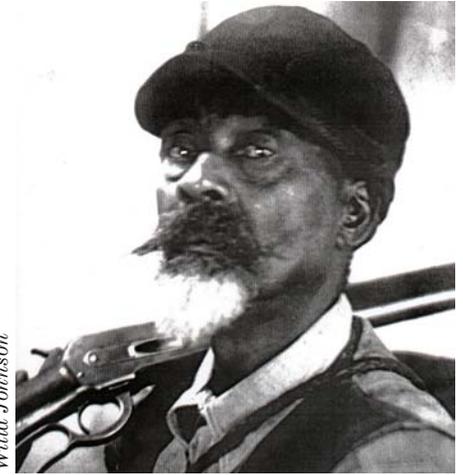
Born in 1846 to the Mississippi slave family of Harrison and Daphne Collier, Holt was one of probably 11 children. The Colliers were house servants to the prominent and influential Howell Hinds family at the Home Hill Plantation in Jefferson County. Holt spent his young years at Home Hill caring for the large pack of hounds that Hinds would take on hunts and Holt would sometimes go along.

When Holt was 10, Howell Hinds took him to another family property, Plum Ridge Plantation, to help attend Hinds' young son, Thomas. Plum Ridge, located in Washington County, was in a rugged wilderness area with huge stands of giant trees and thick cane, stinging insects, venomous snakes, alligators, wolves, panthers and bears. One of Holt's primary duties was to provide meat for the Plum Ridge plantation workers. He hunted with a 12-gauge shotgun, became an excellent marksman and could shoot equally well from either shoulder. While still just 10, Holt shot his first bear.



When the Civil War started Holt joined the Confederacy to be with his masters Howell and Thomas Hinds. He was only 14. He then joined Company I of the Ninth Texas Cavalry, was involved in frequent action and served successfully as a military spy.

After the war, Holt became a Texas cowboy for about one year, but



returned to Mississippi and lived most of the rest of his life around Washington County and part of the original Hinds County, named for his master's family.

As the years passed, Holt became well known for his bear-hunting ability and is credited with killing over 3,000 bears – more than the number taken by Daniel Boone and Davy Crocket put together.

It was the pursuit of black bear that brought President Theodore Roosevelt to Mississippi in 1902 and teamed him together with the then 56-year-old Holt Collier. Holt's unsurpassed expertise made the hunt a success even though the president would not shoot the large male bear that Holt single-handedly captured and tied to a tree. Instead, the incident was nationally publicized in editorial cartoons on the front page of the *Washington Post*. An enterprising New York store owner, Morris Michtom, saw the cartoon and created a stuffed toy he called "Teddy's bear." The popularity of the stuffed bear led to the formation of the Ideal Toy Company. And, when the Teddy bear turned 100 years old in 2002, Mississippi named it the official state toy.

Holt Collier died on August 1, 1936, at 90 years of age. Holt was buried at Live Oak Cemetery in Greenville, Mississippi near the area where he killed his first bear.