Teddy and his brother had bought out their friends the mortgage in full, and in six additional years, 1864, to be paid in three years. After three years, they paid $3,000 as a down payment, with a mortgage of $17,000.

Hill, Pennsylvania. Somehow they scrabbled together dabbled in oil with the Walnut Bend Oil Refinery but never found it. He chased gold in California and never found it. He took a job working for the engineering corps constructing the Binghamton and Syracuse Railroad. He started by driving stakes for the survey, but Teddy turned his attention to the railroad, onto the Tionesta & Salmon Creek Railroad, and his last, the Sheffield & Tionesta Railroad.

When it wasn’t trees he was cutting or railroads he was building, Teddy turned his attention to the towns and houses he and his partners built for their employees. They added schools and village stores, sidewalks and parks. He supplied water, gas, and oil to the homes, but his most prized accomplishment was always building a church, a Methodist Church. A community without a church, in Teddy’s mind, was no community at all. And he didn’t just build them, he and his wife, Mary, also taught Sunday School in them.

When opportunities came his way, he threw his hat in the ring — sometimes with success, sometimes not. He chased gold in California and never found it. He dabbled in oil with the Walnut Bend Oil Refinery but never caught the fever. In 1875 he built the elegant Collins House Hotel in Oil City, Pennsylvania, with his brother, J.V. Collins. And seven years later, sold his interest when the hotel began offering alcohol. When a bank was needed he helped build the Citizens’ National Bank at Tionesta and became its president.

While all of this might have resulted in a man of starchy pomposity and ostentatious peacockery, when it came to Teddy Collins, it did just the opposite. If you met him, you would have seen a small man with chin whiskers, wearing a blue work shirt, slouch hat, and frayed jeans that had brushed by too many trees and were punched unevenly into his old leather boots. He seemed to have one other dress option, and that was a frock coat with tails along with the same old leather boots and old slouch hat. When cars came into fashion in the early 1900s, he stuck with his horse, McGinty, and his two-wheeled cart. He was known to be a bit crusty, certainly frugal, cordially impatient with inefficiency, an extraordinary philanthropist, and a rigid Methodist. Teddy considered all of his possessions to be given to him in trust by God, and because of that, he should be a good steward and a generous giver. That philanthropy extended beyond Pennsylvania to Methodist missions overseas, including the Collins Institute in Calcutta, India, and the Bareilly Theological Seminary in Bareilly, India.

Sharing his life was Mary Stanton Collins, a red-headed school teacher with a quiet, introverted, intelligent disposition and a life-long commitment to the Methodist Church. When it wasn’t trees he was cutting or railroads he was building, Teddy turned his attention to the towns and houses he and his partners built for their employees. They added schools and village stores, sidewalks and parks. He supplied water, gas, and oil to the homes, but his most prized accomplishment was always building a church, a Methodist Church. A community without a church, in Teddy’s mind, was no community at all. And he didn’t just build them, he and his wife, Mary, also taught Sunday School in them.

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Sharing his life was Mary Stanton Collins, a red-headed school teacher with a quiet, introverted, intelligent disposition and a life-long commitment to the Methodist Church. They were married in 1864 and if Teddy was frugal, Mary was more than his match, foregoing the acquisition of material comforts to live plainly and modestly. Her father, Daniel Stanton, had been a lay doctor and Mary picked up enough of his skills to help people in the community when a professional doctor couldn’t be found. They had one child, a son, Everett Stanton Collins, who worked side-by-side with his father and eventually encouraged him to expand the Collins timber operations to Washington, California, and Oregon.

It is no mistake that the inheritance Teddy and Mary left to their son and future generations of Collinses was more enduring than the lands and trees, mills and railroads that spread over the country. It was a set of values that has kept the company family-owned for now into its fifth generation — and hopefully, with more to come. Those values that reverberate through the generations include: Do the right thing; Believe in self-discipline; Commit to work and live simply; Respect those who labor with and for you; Resolve to be scrupulously honest in all your affairs; Regard thrift as a prized value; And remember — that if God has brought you more, then more is expected of you.

Teddy Collins died April 15, 1914, at the age of 83 in his beloved town of Nebraska, Pennsylvania, located in the Tionesta Valley. He had lived there with his family since 1882. Mary Stanton Collins preceded him in death, dying six years earlier on October 29, 1908.