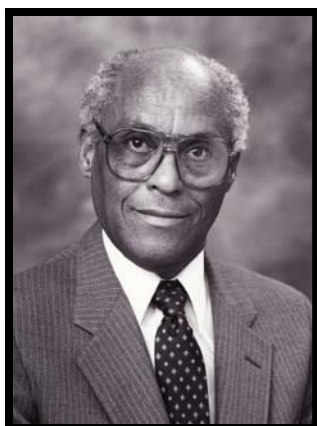


“Black History on the Money”

**Hosted by: USC Black Alumni Association
USC Libraries, Special Collections
Center for Black Students and Cultural Affairs**

February 19, 2008 4-6 pm
Davidson Conference Center, Vineyard Room
Presented by: Mr. John E. Collins



“Black History on the Money” is an effort to create awareness regarding the history of African Americans and United States currency. Presentation and discussion will be based upon a meticulous collection of artifacts which reveal the manner in which African Americans were portrayed in the economic systems of early America, and which also reveal the history of African American involvement in designing and authorizing American currency. This tremendous collection includes a cancelled check from the Freedman’s Savings and Trust Company. The check was researched for 18 years, which led to an unpublished manuscript about the Freedman’s Bank. Its’ story is truly intriguing. This bank was created illegally by Congress for exclusive use by free Negroes and ex-slaves who amassed \$57,000,000 through small change deposits. This money was misappropriated, stolen and loaned to “white” companies, and of course those loans were never repaid.

The artifacts of this collection, used as educational tools, demonstrate a noted and needed addition to current educational curriculums by portraying a clearer, truer picture of American history. The outcomes of this presentation will include enlightened discussion and critical thinking about the ramifications of American racism which were perpetuated and utilized systemically throughout the economic foundations of this country.

Overview of the Collector:

Mr. John E. Collins
Original collector, Historian

John E. Collins, BA, MA, is a former teacher, retired pastor and author. His curiosity was sparked when first seeing African Americans on American paper currency. Although Collins held a membership in the American Numismatic Association, it was only utilized as a resource medium to enhance his research prospects in learning more about African Americans on the money and to secure evidence of it. He discovered no books were written on this topic.

The American Numismatic Association resources were unable to assist Collins in his research. Yet working with Kelly Miller, a contemporary African American historian, he identified four African American signatures on American currency. Knowing of the money and acquiring the money were two very different things indeed. The acquisition of this money proved to be quite a task. Locating, inspecting and purchasing was done in many different ways, so as not to raise awareness, curiosity and ultimately price gouging by other collectors.

Collins was also successful in his mission to get Isaac Scott Hathaway included in the American Numismatic Association. He was overlooked as the first African American to design and sculpt an American coin. Mr. Collins wrote an essay detailing Hathaway’s work on the 1946 Booker T. Washington half dollar coin, the 1951 conjoined bust and the Booker T. Washington / George Washington Carver commemorative silver half dollar. These items are also included in the collection.

Mr. Collins is a World War Two veteran. Collins is also among the last of the Buffalo Soldiers, 2nd Calvary Division, which included the 9th, 10th, 27th, and 28th, all African American, all horse Calvary regiments. He was an eyewitness to the highly charged and emotional dismantling of the African American horse

cavalrymen on the foreign soil of Algiers, North Africa. Mr. Collins resides in Madera, California with his wife Gwendolyn.