

Key Moments in St. Peter's History

A series of historical highlights from the first 200 years of St. Peter – Libertytown.

Fr. John Leo Collins

Fr. John Leo Collins was born on August 29, 1886, in Tyrone, Dungannon, Ireland. According to the Irish census of 1901, he was residing at 3 Chapel Road, Dungannon, Tyrone, Ireland, with his parents and three sisters. This region of Ireland is currently known as Northern Ireland, by which name it has been known since the remainder of Ireland gained its independence from British rule in 1922.

John Leo Collins, aged 21, departed Queenstown (now Cobh), Ireland and arrived in New York City on August 30, 1907. He was described as being 5'8", with dark complexion, black hair, and brown eyes and his occupation was noted as laborer. He indicated that his final destination was Baltimore and that his sponsoring individual in the US was a cousin, Rev. John. E. Wade, in 1905 a priest in the Archdiocese of Baltimore and pastor of the church of Saints Philip and James in Baltimore, and that he had \$25 in his possession, which would be worth about \$800 in 2023 dollars. In the US census of 1910, he was living at 737 Fulton Ave., Baltimore .

In the U. S., he studied at Mt. St. Mary College in Emmitsburg and at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. He was ordained by Bishop Owen Corrigan on June 28, 1914. He was first appointed to St. John's Church in Frederick, MD.

During both World War I and World War II he registered for the draft but was never selected.

In June of 1920 Fr. Collins departed for a trip home to Ireland on the Cunard Lines ship *Imperator*. After a stay of two months, he arrived back in September on the White Star ship *Olympic*. He said that he had a very pleasant visit but was glad to get back to Maryland and to Frederick.

One wonders if the fact that his return trip was on the sister ship of the *Titanic*, which sank 8 years earlier, weighed in at all in his remarks! Upon his return, he discovered that he had been transferred to St. Jerome's in Baltimore.

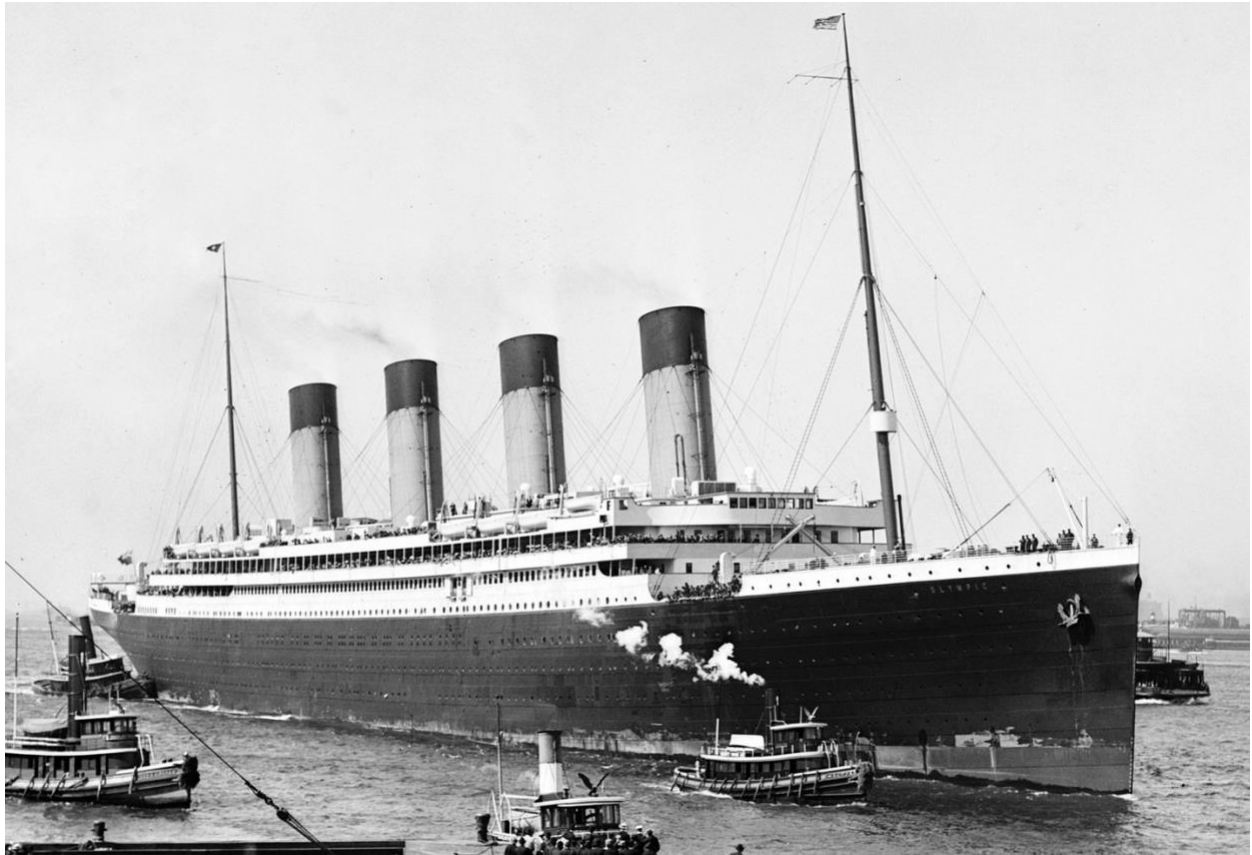


Figure 1 White Star Olympic in New York

Courtesy: Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division

He served at St. Jerome's from 1921 to 1924, St. Mary's in Newport from 1925 to 1928, St. Peter's in Waldorf from 1929 to 1935, and St. Peter's in Libertytown from 1938-1943. In late 1943 he was transferred from St. Peter's due to a debilitating illness from which he suffered until his death in 1959.

On Sunday, April 12, 1942, he led the St. Peter's contingent on the Central Maryland Holy Name Society sponsored pilgrimage to the tomb of Mother Elizabeth Seton at St. Joseph's College, Emmitsburg, MD. The Rev. Salvator M. Burgio, CM, postulator for the cause of Mother Seton, delivered the sermon in the mail chapel at St. Joseph's College.

Fr. Collins died on November 7, 1959, and was buried at New Cathedral Cemetery in Baltimore.