

Conversation with Michael Collins, ex-astronaut, Washington, 20 Dec. 1971

While walking through L'Enfant Plaza during the lunch hour I encountered Mike Collins, who now heads the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum (and hopes to get a big chunk of the \$70 million he needs to build a new museum before 1976). I said I'd always been puzzled about his not being a Catholic; I knew his uncle Lightnin' Joe, ex-Chief of Staff of the Army, and his wife Pat were Catholics.

"My father [Major General James C.] came from a big Catholic family. There were a dozen children. But my father had a falling out with the sisters at school, and he quit going to mass. Then he married my mother, who was a Protestant. All the rest of the Collinses remained Catholics."

I asked Mike about the book he said he was going to write. "I keep intending to write it, but I'm too busy," he said.